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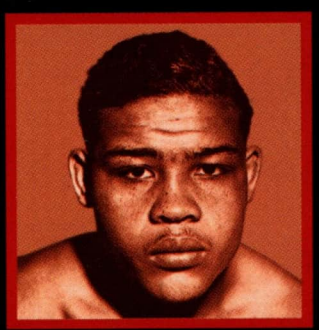
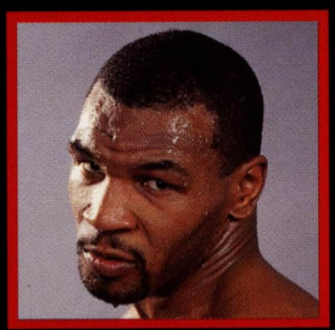
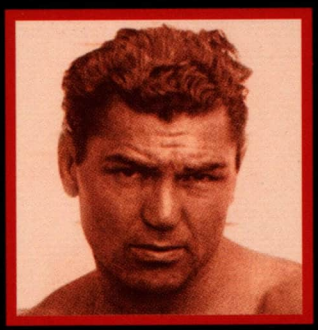
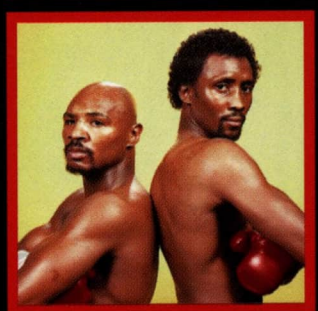
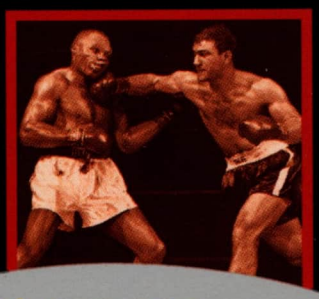
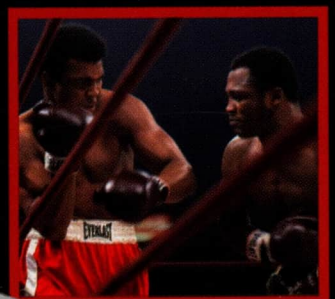

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Vol. III, No. 1

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Vol. III, No. 1

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RINGSIDE

Not every reader of *The Ring* will be able to attend our 75th Anniversary Weekend, scheduled for Bally's Park Place Casino/Resort in Atlantic City on March 7, 8, and 9. *(See information below.)* However, this special issue, sure to become a collector's item, allows everyone to join the celebration. *The Ring* is the oldest continuously published sports magazine in the USA, and the following pages recap what boxing fans have been reading about since 1922.

How long is 75 years? It's just about the average life span, but for people, not magazines; *The Ring* has every intention of making it to 100—and well beyond. In 1922, sports editor Nat Fleischer, inspired by the unimaginable success of the Jack Dempsey-Georges Carpentier heavyweight title fight, came up with the idea of publishing a New York City fight newsletter. The first issue of *The Ring,* dated February 15, 1922, and priced at 20 cents, was all of 24 pages. During Fleischer's 50 years at the helm, his modest newsletter grew into "The Bible Of Boxing."

About once a month, and almost always during the desperation of deadline, I feel like *I've* been editing *The Ring* for 50 years. But there'll never be another Fleischer, who, fighters aside, rates with the most influential figures in the 100-plus years of boxing's modern era. In fact, due to Fleischer's incredible run, there have been 14 Presidents of the United States since 1922, but only six editors of *The Ring.* Only a politician would argue which job is tougher.

The half-dozen editors at the helm have been fortunate to be associated with this magical title. More importantly, we've been lucky to be up-close-and-personal observers of a most fascinating subject. The last 75 years have given us Dempsey and Louis and Ali, Holyfield and Foreman and Tyson, the Leonards Benny and Ray, and the original Sugar Ray. There have been the highs of Hagler-Hearns and the lows of Bowe-Golota (I and II). We've witnessed triumph and tragedy, international growth and, more recently, a disturbing downsizing, and enough controversy to fill a tabloid headline writer with glee. What other sport would dare give us Don King and "No Mas" and Fan Man?

Thanks to the painstaking research of ring historians Steve Nicolaisen and Mike Silver, we've captured the essence of the 75 years of *The Ring.* Hey, Nat, looks like that 24-page newsletter is gonna make it after all.

***

Those interested in more information on our 75th Anniversary Weekend, including prices for weekend packages, attending the awards banquet, participating in the live auction, reserving a table at the collectibles show, or sponsorship opportunities, should send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: THE RING 75th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Steve Farhood
Editor-in-Chief

Volume III, No. 1

The RING® EXTRA

THE RING
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THE RING EXTRA (ISSN: 1078-9685) is published annually by London Publishing Co., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002. Single copy price $5.95 ($6.99 in Canada, £3.95 in U.K.). Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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THE RING IS THROWING A PARTY TO CELEBRATE ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY...AND YOU ARE INVITED!

THE RING 75TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

WHAT: THE RING 75TH Anniversary Weekend will include five events: an awards banquet, cocktail party/lithograph unveiling, memorabilia exhibit/live auction, autograph signing session, and silent auction featuring boxing collectibles

WHEN: March 7, 8, & 9, 1997

WHY: To commemorate THE RING's Diamond Anniversary and recognize the fight game's "best of the best" over the past 75 years

WHO: The largest gathering of former and current champions ever assembled is expected to be on hand to attend the five events. In addition, all events will be open to the public

WHERE: Bally's Park Place Casino·Resort in Atlantic City, NJ

OTHER: Proceeds from the boxing collectible silent auction will benefit the GOLDEN GLOVES OF AMERICA

For more information, including prices for weekend packages, attending the awards banquet, participating in the live auction, reserving a table at the collectibles show, or sponsorship opportunities, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

THE RING 75th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND
P.O. Box 1148
Fort Washington, PA 19034

4385/09-96

FEBRUARY 1922

1922

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Harry Greb W 15 Gene Tunney. Tunney, the newly crowned American light heavyweight champion, takes a 15-round beating from Greb. His nose broken, and badly cut over both eyes, Tunney somehow stays on his feet until the final bell. He'll later say of his only defeat, "I never learned as much in any single fight." He and Greb will fight four more times.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

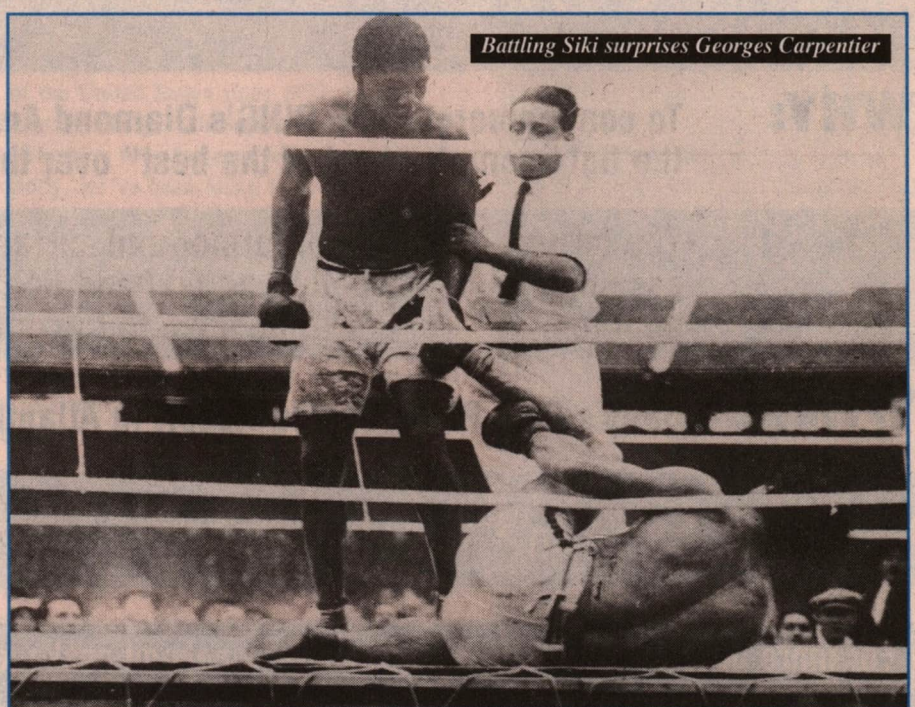
Harry Greb. Most of Greb's 13 bouts are no-decisions, but two victories more than earn him top honors. In March, Greb, not yet world middleweight champion, decisions light heavyweight Tommy Gibbons, and in May, he defeats future heavyweight champion Gene Tunney. It turns out to be the only defeat of Tunney's career. Greb ends the year at 69-2-2 (35) with 153 no-decisions.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Battling Siki KO 6 Georges Carpentier. Carpentier, a loser to heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey in 1921, defends the light heavyweight title against the lightly regarded Siki. Down in the third, Siki batters Carpentier before knocking him out in the sixth. He is initially disqualified for tripping his opponent, but the French Boxing Federation reverses the referee's decision, declaring Siki the winner and new champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Benny Leonard-Lew Tendler (8). Lightweight champion Leonard, staggered by a left to the jaw, pulls Tendler into a clinch, then compliments him. Tendler, conned into believing Leonard isn't hurt, doesn't move in for the finish, and the bout goes the full 12 no-decision rounds. The following year, Leonard soundly defeats Tendler over 15 rounds.



Battling Siki surprises Georges Carpentier

It Also Happened

At age 21, Mickey Walker wins the world welter title, outpointing the 37-year-old Jack Britton … Seeking the light heavyweight title, former world welter champ Ted "Kid" Lewis is stopped in one round by Georges Carpentier … World flyweight champ Jimmy Wilde fails to defend the title for the fifth straight year … Lightweight king Benny Leonard challenges Britton for the 147-pound title, but shows little effort and gets DQ'd under suspicious circumstances in the 13th round … Heavyweight king Jack Dempsey boxes only in exhibitions … Light heavyweight Gene Tunney loses two quarts of blood during a brutal 15-round decision loss to Harry Greb.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Jack Dempsey
Light Heavyweight: Battling Siki
Middleweight: William Bryan Downey
Welterweight: Mickey Walker
Lightweight: Benny Leonard
Junior Lightweight: Johnny Dundee
Featherweight: Johnny Kilbane
Bantamweight: Joe Lynch
Flyweight: Pancho Villa

1923

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jack Dempsey KO 2 Luis Angel Firpo. Firpo, a 6'2", 216-pound brawler from Argentina, drops Dempsey to his knees early in the first. Dempsey arises, and proceeds to floor Firpo seven times. Firpo then drives Dempsey out of the ring with a right to the jaw. Climbing back in time, the champion downs Firpo in the second before poleaxing him with a left-right to the jaw.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

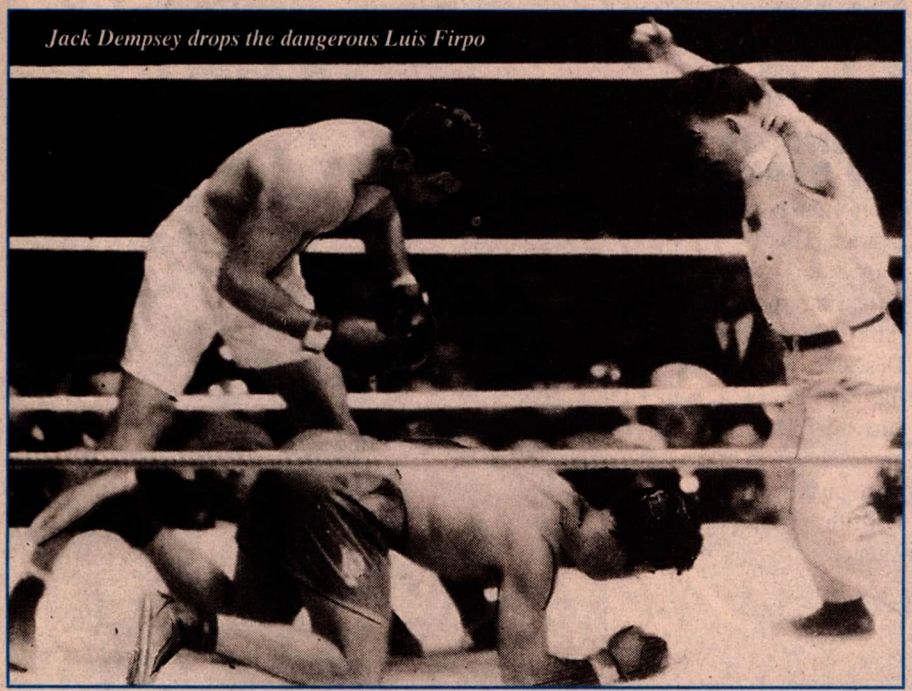
Jack Dempsey. Dempsey's first fight in two years, a 15-round decision over Tommy Gibbons, sets up his defense in September against Luis Firpo. In just under four minutes of action, Dempsey, down twice, floors the bigger Firpo nine times before knocking him out. He advances to 61-3-10 (48).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney W 15 Harry Greb. After having taken a beating in his first fight with Greb, Tunney dominates the rematch, keeping his rival at bay with his jab and landing rights under the heart when in close. In the 14th, Tunney staggers Greb with a right to the head, then pounds him in the 15th. The winner regains the American light heavyweight title, handing Greb his first defeat in more than seven years.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

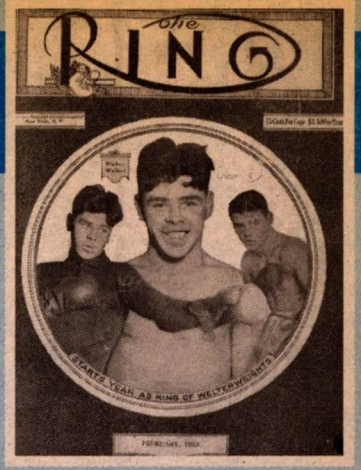
Jack Dempsey-Luis Firpo (1). Seconds after the opening bell, Firpo drops Dempsey. "The Manassa Mauler" then floors Firpo seven times, often knocking him down as soon as he can rise. Hurt, but also angered, the challenger lands a right that sends Dempsey out of the ring and into press row. Fighting purely on instinct, Dempsey survives the remainder of the round.



Jack Dempsey drops the dangerous Luis Firpo

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Jack Dempsey
Light Heavyweight: Mike McTigue
Middleweight: Harry Greb
Welterweight: Mickey Walker
Lightweight: Benny Leonard
Junior Lightweight: Johnny Dundee
Featherweight: Eugene Criqui
Bantamweight: Joe Lynch
Flyweight: Pancho Villa



FEBRUARY 1923

It Also Happened

Filipino flyweight Pancho Villa ends the title reign—and the career—of the legendary Jimmy Wilde, halting him in seven rounds … Heavyweight king Jack Dempsey outpoints Tommy Gibbons in an infamous bout that bankrupts the town of Shelby, Montana … In his toughest defense, lightweight king Benny Leonard overcomes some shaky moments to decision Philadelphia southpaw Lew Tendler over 15 rounds … Battling Siki makes the mistake of defending the light heavyweight title against an Irishman on St. Patrick's Day—in Dublin! To no one's surprise, Mike McTigue takes the title by 20-round decision.

JUNE 1924

1924

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney KO 15 Georges Carpentier. In his last fight as a light heavyweight, Tunney floors game former world champion Carpentier three times in the 10th. At the end of the 14th, Carpentier goes down from a body blow. His manager, Francois Descamps, claims Carpentier has been fouled, but referee Andy Griffith nonetheless declares Tunney the winner by knockout.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Harry Greb. Greb defends the middleweight title by decisioning Johnny Wilson and Ted Moore over 15 rounds and stopping Fay Kaiser in 12. He fights 16 times during the year, including victories over Jimmy Slattery and Jackie Clark and a 10-round no-decision bout with Gene Tunney. Greb finishes at 85-6-3 (40) with 164 no-decisions.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Steve (Kid) Sullivan W 10 Johnny Dundee. The 30-year-old Dundee, a veteran of 301 bouts, holds the world featherweight and junior lightweight titles and, although past his prime, is favored to defeat Sullivan, who sports a record of 7-11-2 in his last 20 bouts. Sullivan shocks the experts and Dundee, winning a decision and the junior lightweight title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney-Georges Carpentier (10). Tunney floors Carpentier three times during the round. After the third knockdown, Francois Descamps tries to throw in the sponge as a sign of surrender, but Carpentier argues with him to continue, then pushes referee Andy Griffith aside to attack Tunney.

Bantam king Abe Goldstein shows his chief weapon to his sister and brother-in-law

It Also Happened

At the request of his mother, world lightweight champion and pound-for-pound king Benny Leonard retires at age 28 … Heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey continues to box only in exhibitions … Canada's Jack Delaney moves to the head of the light heavy class with wins over Tommy Loughran and Paul Berlenbach … Middleweight king Harry Greb keeps the crown, but in a non-title bout, he loses for the third time to arch-rival Gene Tunney … Future heavyweight champs Max Schmeling and Jack Sharkey turn pro.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Jack Dempsey
Light Heavyweight: Gene Tunney
Middleweight: Harry Greb
Welterweight: Mickey Walker
Lightweight: Benny Leonard
Junior Lightweight: Steve (Kid) Sullivan
Featherweight: Louis (Kid) Kaplan
Bantamweight: Abe Goldstein
Flyweight: Pancho Villa

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JULY 1925

1925

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Harry Greb W 15 Mickey Walker. Middleweight champ Greb and welter titlist Walker brawl for 15 wild rounds, with the former's title at stake. Greb, who nearly knocks out Walker in the 14th, wins by unanimous decision. Later that night, the two brawl again outside a New York City speakeasy.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Paul Berlenbach. A converted southpaw with a tremendous left hook, Berlenbach wins eight of nine fights, with one no-contest. After stopping Battling Siki in 10 rounds, he wins the world light heavyweight title by decisioning Mike McTigue over 15, then defends by kayoing Jimmy Slattery and decisioning Jack Delaney. He finishes the year at 27-1-2 (24).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Dave Shade KO 3 Jimmy Slattery. On the Greb-Walker undercard, Slattery, on the verge of a light heavyweight title fight, faces welterweight Shade. Fighting out of a low crouch, Shade befuddles Slattery. When the bigger man moves in to score in the third, Shade floors him twice with rights to the chin, forcing a stoppage.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney-Tommy Gibbons (12). Aiming for a heavyweight title fight with Jack Dempsey, Tunney faces 105-fight veteran Gibbons, who has lost just three times (once by decision to Dempsey) and has never been stopped. In the 12th, Tunney floors the battered Gibbons for the first time in his career. When he rises, Tunney knocks him out with a right to the jaw.

Mickey Walker (left) and Harry Greb sign for their historic fight

It Also Happened

Only 10 days after losing a non-title 10-rounder to Jimmy McLarnin, flyweight champ Pancho Villa, 23, died of blood poisoning caused by an ulcerated tooth … For the second consecutive year, heavyweight king Jack Dempsey fails to defend the title … Headlining the first fight card at the new Madison Square Garden, light heavyweight champ Paul Berlenbach outpoints Jack Delaney … Thirty-year-old veteran Rocky Kansas wins the lightweight title vacated by Benny Leonard … Tod Morgan begins a lengthy title reign by dethroning junior lightweight king Mike Ballerino via 10th-round kayo … Charley Phil Rosenberg reduces 39 pounds in training before winning the world bantam title from Cannonball Martin.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Jack Dempsey
Light Heavyweight: Paul Berlenbach
Middleweight: Harry Greb
Welterweight: Mickey Walker
Lightweight: Jimmy Goodrich
Junior Lightweight: Mike Ballerino
Featherweight: Louis (Kid) Kaplan
Bantamweight: Charley Phil Rosenberg
Flyweight: Pancho Villa

1926

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney W 10 Jack Dempsey. Despite not having fought in three years, Dempsey enters Sesquicentennial Stadium an 11-5 favorite. Tunney establishes his mastery from the opening bell, however, surviving a shaky fourth to batter Dempsey's face en route to a unanimous decision victory and the heavyweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

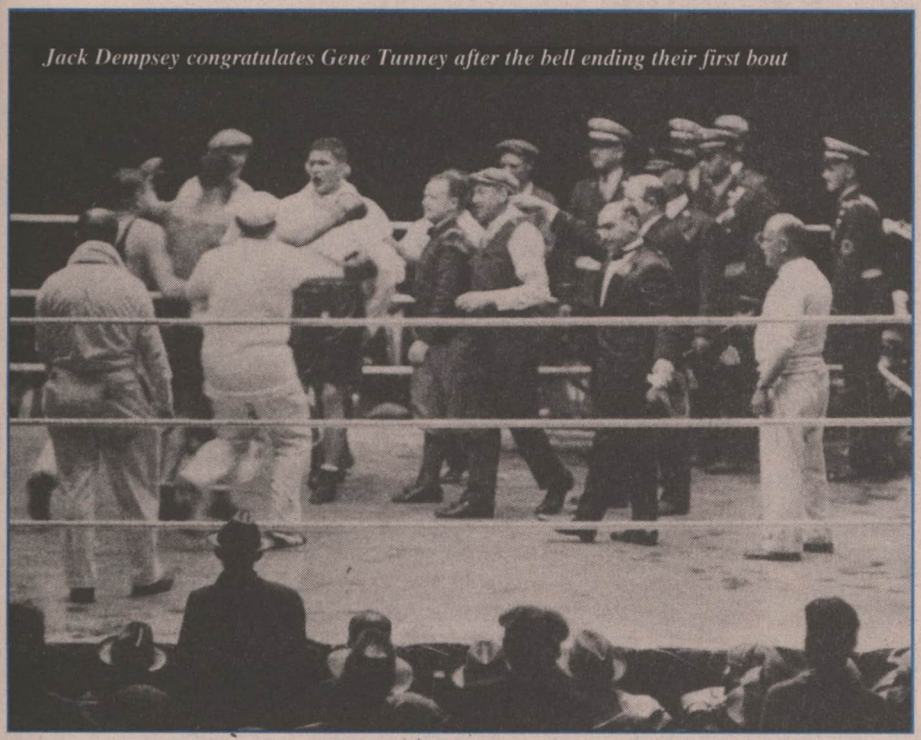
Gene Tunney. Tunney's lone ring appearance is his long-awaited shot at the heavyweight title. In front of more than 120,000 rain-drenched spectators, he clearly outpoints Jack Dempsey over 10 rounds to become the new champion. Tunney improves to 56-1-1 (42).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Pete Latzo W 10 Mickey Walker. Welterweight champion Walker is a 4-1 favorite to retain the crown, but Latzo, behind early, comes on to outfight the titlist, hurting him late in the sixth, then jolting him with a right to the chin at the final bell and earning a majority decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney-Jack Dempsey (1). Tunney, who has studied Dempsey for years, unloads a hard right to the face just 30 seconds in. Dempsey is both stunned and surprised as Tunney, working behind his jab and repeatedly beating "The Manassa Mauler" to the punch, easily wins the round and sets the pattern for the rest of the bout.



Jack Dempsey congratulates Gene Tunney after the bell ending their first bout

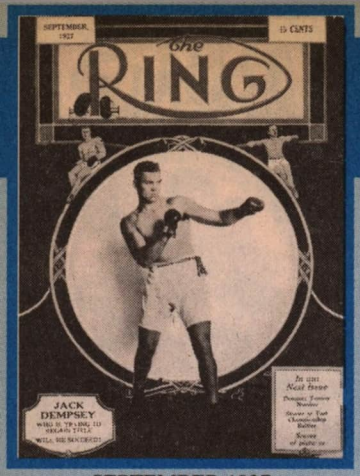
THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Gene Tunney
Light Heavyweight: Jack Delaney
Middleweight: Tiger Flowers
Welterweight: Pete Latzo
Junior Welterweight: Mushy Callahan
Lightweight: Sammy Mandell
Junior Lightweight: Tod Morgan
Featherweight: Louis (Kid) Kaplan
Bantamweight: Bud Taylor
Flyweight: Fidel LaBarba

SEPTEMBER 1926

It Also Happened

Eight months after losing the middleweight title, Harry Greb, 32, dies of a cerebral hemmorhage while undergoing nasal surgery … Reluctant to promote a white-black bout, Tex Rickard continues to deny number-one heavyweight contender Harry Wills a shot at world champ Jack Dempsey … Light heavyweight Jack Delaney wins the world title, decisioning familiar rival Paul Berlenbach over 15 rounds … The recently created junior welterweight division gains wide recognition when New York City's Mushy Callahan wins the title by outpointing Pinkey Mitchell.



SEPTEMBER 1927

1927

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney W 10 Jack Dempsey. Leading after six rounds, Tunney is floored in the seventh. When Dempsey fails to immediately go to a neutral corner, Tunney receives several additional seconds to recover. He floors Dempsey in the eighth and is on the verge of scoring a knockout at the final bell.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Mickey Walker. Crowned middleweight king after having defeated Tiger Flowers the previous December, Walker knocks out British Empire champion Tommy Milligan (KO 10) in London. Going 5-0 for the year, he finishes with triumphs over two former light heavyweight champions, knocking out Mike McTigue in one and defeating Paul Berlenbach in 10. Walker finishes at 46-9 (35).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

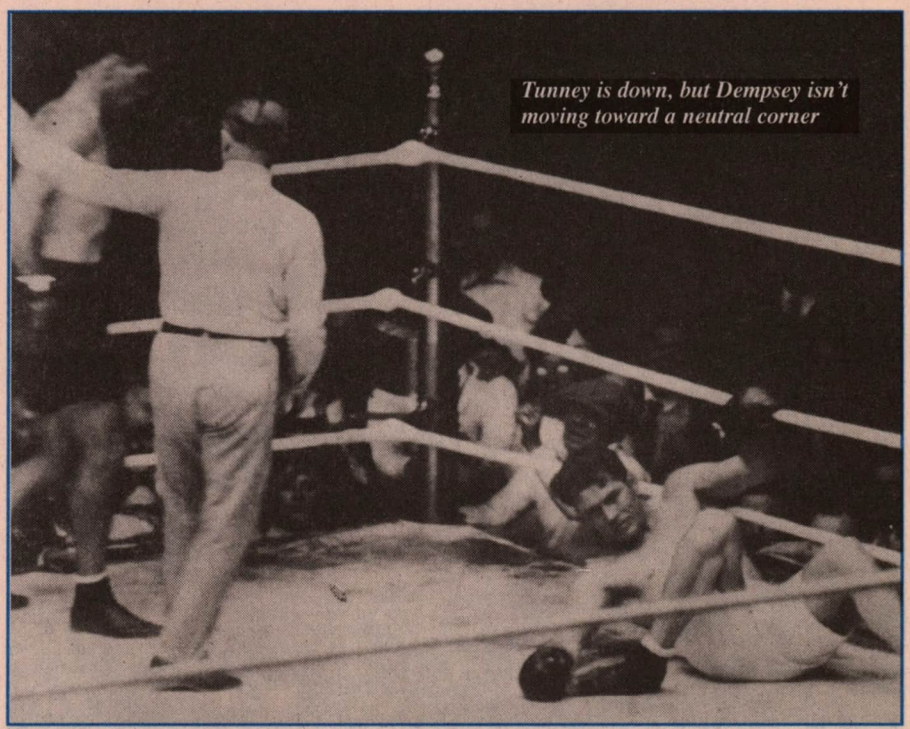
Mike McTigue KO 4 Paul Berlenbach. Two years before, Berlenbach had defeated McTigue for the light heavyweight title. Now both are former champions. Both are rocked and battered until the fourth, when McTigue floors Berlenbach for the full count.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney-Jack Dempsey (7). Dempsey catches Tunney against the ropes with a hook to the jaw, then floors him with a followup barrage. Referee Dave Barry does not begin to count over Tunney until Dempsey heads for a neutral corner. Benefiting from what will come to be called "The Long Count," Tunney gets up and survives the round.

It Also Happened

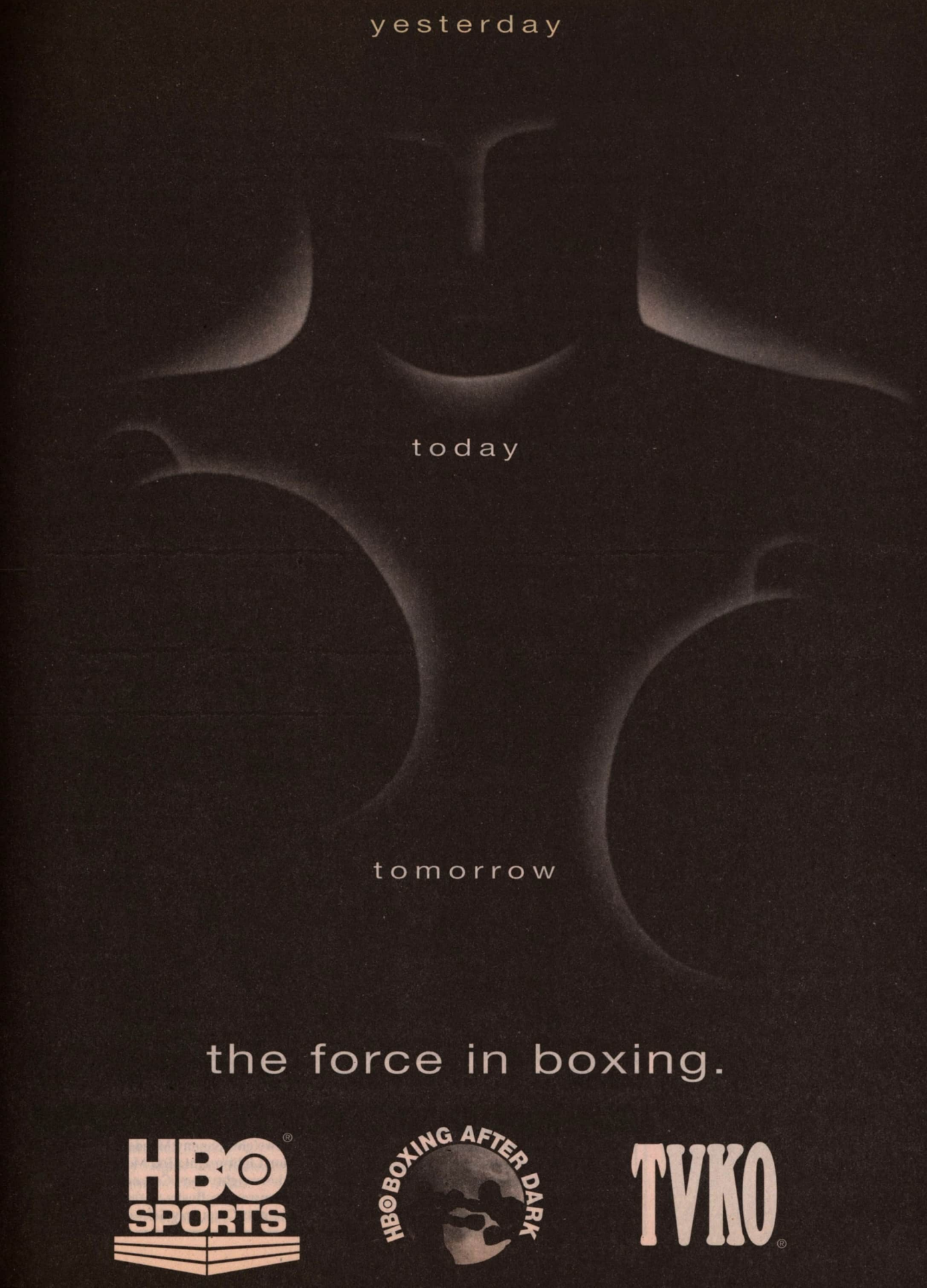
Flyweight champ Fidel LaBarba, 21, shocks the boxing community by retiring and enrolling at Stanford University. (His retirement would last less than one year.) … Four days after scoring a victory over Leo Gates, former middleweight champ Tiger Flowers, 32, dies of status lymphaticus while undergoing surgery to remove scar tissue from above his eyes … Heavyweight champ Gene Tunney keeps the title in his rematch with Jack Dempsey, but only after being floored in the seventh round and benefiting from "The Long Count" … Tony Canzoneri, 18, wins the world featherweight title, outpointing Johnny Dundee.



Tunney is down, but Dempsey isn't moving toward a neutral corner

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Gene Tunney
Light Heavyweight: Tommy Loughran
Middleweight: Mickey Walker
Welterweight: Joe Dundee
Junior Welterweight: Mushy Callahan
Lightweight: Sammy Mandell
Junior Lightweight: Tod Morgan
Featherweight: Benny Bass
Bantamweight: Bud Taylor
Flyweight: Fidel LaBarba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APRIL 1928

1928

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Tommy Loughran W 15 Leo Lomski. Light heavyweight champion Loughran, seldom floored in his entire career, is downed twice in the first by the hard-hitting Lomski. Barely up at nine from the second knockdown, the champion boxes his way out of trouble, but doesn't really wake up until the fifth. From then on, he is fully in control.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Gene Tunney. Having already defeated Dempsey twice, Tunney defends the heavyweight title with an 11th-round stoppage of Tom Heeney at Yankee Stadium. Soon afterward, he announces his retirement, finishing at 58-1-1 (43).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

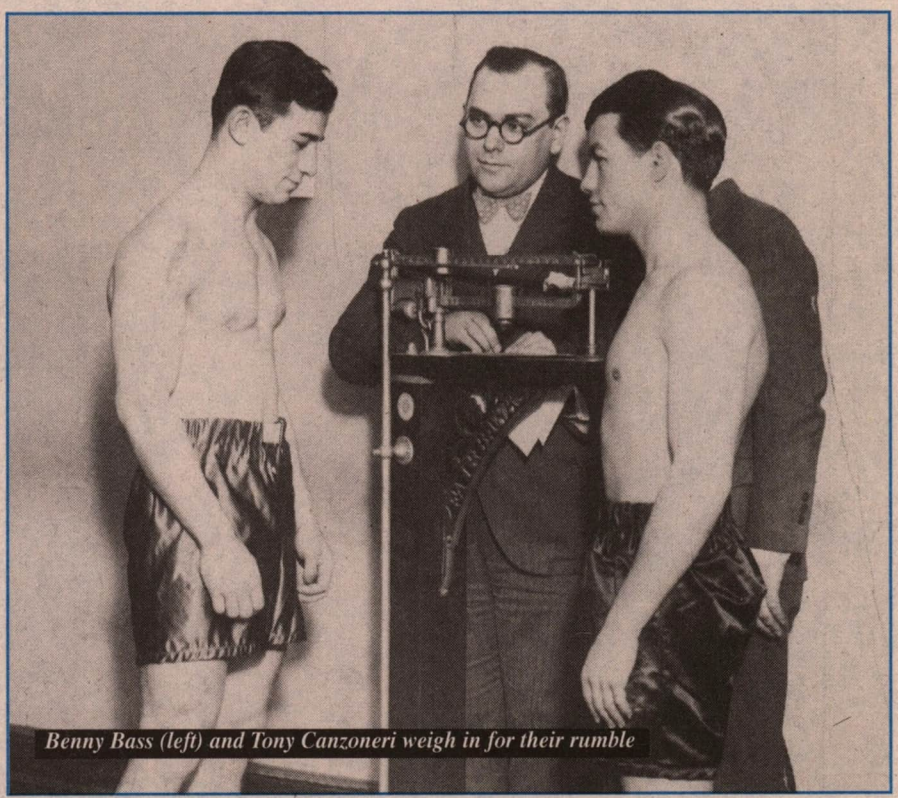
Andre Routis W 15 Tony Canzoneri. Canzoneri is a 3-1 favorite to retain the featherweight title. Weakened from making 126 pounds, he opens up early in an attempt to knock out Routis. The French challenger survives the assault, then outpunches Canzoneri down the stretch to become the new champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jack Sharkey-Jack Delaney (1). Having been kayoed by Jack Dempsey in 1927, and a decision loser to Johnny Risko just six weeks before this bout, Sharkey hurts former light heavyweight champion Delaney with a left hook to the jaw, then floors him. When Delaney gets up, Sharkey unloads a barrage that leaves the Canadian on his face.

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Gene Tunney successfully defends against Tom Heeney, then retires at age 31 … Engaging in his first world title fight, Jimmy McLarnin is outpointed by lightweight king Sammy Mandell … In a featherweight unification bout, Tony Canzoneri decisions Benny Bass over 15 grueling rounds … Former heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey, 32, announces his retirement in February … Primo Carnera turns pro in Paris … In a shocker at Madison Square Garden, Frenchman and 3-1 underdog Andre Routis outhustles Tony Canzoneri to win the world featherweight crown.



Benny Bass (left) and Tony Canzoneri weigh in for their rumble

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Gene Tunney
Light Heavyweight: Tommy Loughran
Middleweight: Mickey Walker
Welterweight: Jackie Fields
Junior Welterweight: Mushy Callahan
Lightweight: Sammy Mandell
Junior Lightweight: Tod Morgan
Featherweight: Tony Canzoneri
Bantamweight: Bushy Graham
Flyweight: Corp. Izzy Schwartz

1929

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Max Schmeling KO 9 Johnny Risko. Making his fourth start in the USA, Schmeling faces the rugged Risko, who has already beaten Jack Sharkey and suffered just one stoppage defeat in his career. Schmeling stuns Risko in the first with his vaunted right hand, but Risko fights back until the ninth, when Schmeling floors and stops him. It is the German's biggest win to date.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

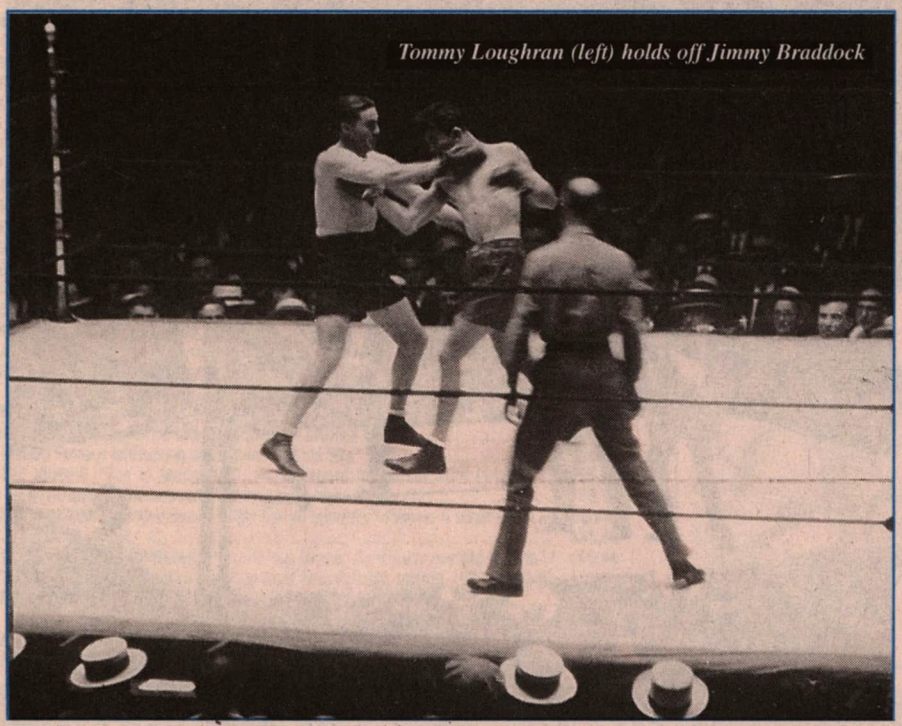
Tommy Loughran. The light heavyweight champion successfully defends against middleweight champion Mickey Walker and future heavyweight champion Jimmy Braddock. As a heavyweight, he defeats Ernie Schaaf, but in his last fight of the year, is stopped in the third round by Jack Sharkey. He finishes the year at 59-6-4 (16).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Emile (Spider) Pladner KO 1 Frankie Genaro. NBA flyweight champion and two-time conqueror of Pancho Villa, Genaro has never been stopped in a 97-fight career dating back to 1920. Pladner, the former European champion, swarms into a surprised Genaro, flattening him in only 58 seconds and winning the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jack Sharkey-Tommy Loughran (3). In a bout for the vacant American heavyweight title, former light heavyweight champ Loughran easily wins the first two rounds. But he's floored by a right to the head in the third. When Loughran gets back up and still seems dazed, referee Lou Magnolia stops the bout.



Tommy Loughran (left) holds off Jimmy Braddock

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Jack Sharkey
Light Heavyweight: Tommy Loughran
Middleweight: Mickey Walker
Welterweight: Jackie Fields
Junior Welterweight: Jack (Kid) Berg
Lightweight: Sammy Mandell
Junior Lightweight: Tod Morgan
Featherweight: Bat Battalino
Bantamweight: Panama Al Brown
Flyweight: Frankie Genaro

FEBRUARY 1929

It Also Happened

A betting scandal erupts when Benny Bass opens as a 5-1 favorite, then wins the junior lightweight title, knocking out longtime champ Tod Morgan in the second round … In a battle of world champs, light heavy king Tommy Loughran outpoints middleweight titleholder Mickey Walker … Legendary promoter Tex Rickard dies. At the time of his passing, he is trying to talk Jack Dempsey into a comeback … Stylish stringbean bantamweight Panama Al Brown wins the vacant world title, outpointing Vidal Gregorio over 15 rounds … Max Baer turns pro.

JANUARY 1930

1930

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jack (Kid) Berg W 10 Kid Chocolate. Future featherweight champion Chocolate faces junior welterweight champion Berg at 133 pounds. Chocolate stuns Berg in the third and eighth, but "The Whitechapel Windmill" attacks incessantly, pounding the Cuban to the body and having him hanging on at the final bell. The defeat is the first of Chocolate's career.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

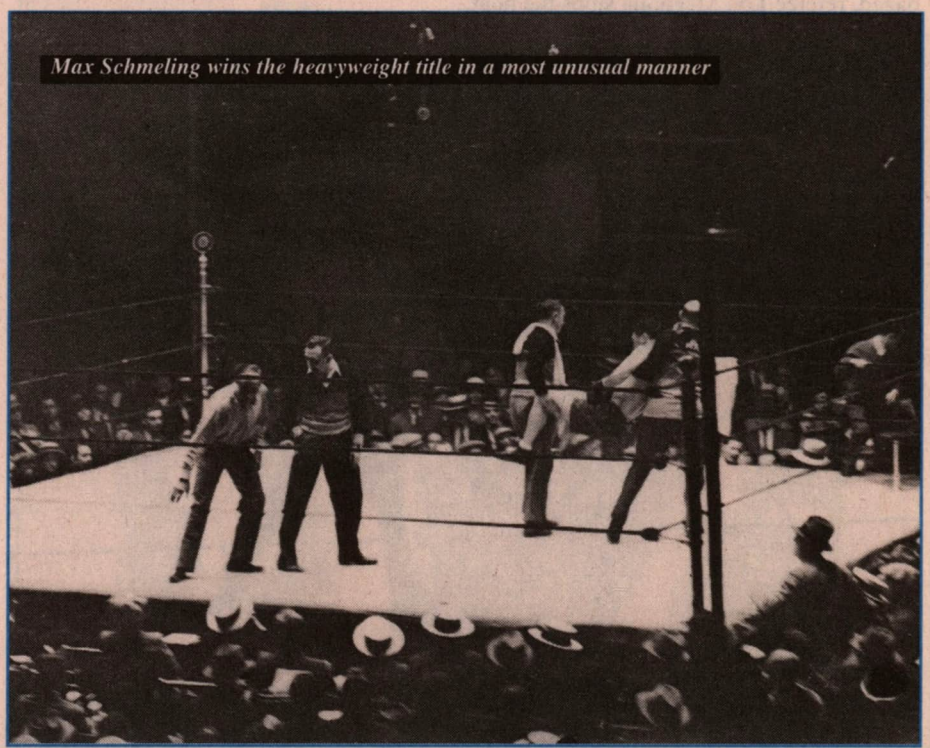
Max Schmeling. Not yet 25, Schmeling wins the vacant world heavyweight title on a foul in the fourth round, when Sharkey strikes low. The German is the first heavyweight champ since Gene Tunney's retirement nearly two years before. He goes to 43-4-2 (28).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Al Singer KO 1 Sammy Mandell. A protege of Benny Leonard, Singer faces lightweight champion Mandell who, in four years, has defended against the likes of Jimmy McLarnin and Tony Canzoneri. In a shocker, Singer, a sizable underdog, knocks Mandell cold in just 106 seconds and becomes the new champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Max Schmeling-Jack Sharkey (4). In the midst of an exchange at close quarters, Sharkey unintentionally hits Schmeling with a hook below the belt. The German drops in agony, unable to continue. After considerable confusion, he is declared the winner on a foul and new heavyweight champion.



Max Schmeling wins the heavyweight title in a most unusual manner

It Also Happened

In a bout for the vacant world heavyweight title, Max Schmeling wins on a fourth-round foul when it is ruled that Jack Sharkey hit him low … Cuban sensation Kid Chocolate's amateur and pro unbeaten streak of 160 fights is broken by Jack (Kid) Berg; Chocolate also fails in his first try at a world title when he loses on points to feather king Bat Battalino … Berg wins unofficial recognition as the world's best fighter, pound-for-pound, by defeating Tony Canzoneri, defending junior welter champ Mushy Callahan, and Billy Petrolle … Slap-happy Maxie Rosenbloom wins the light heavy title by decisioning Jimmy Slattery.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Max Schmeling
Light Heavyweight: Maxie Rosenbloom
Middleweight: Mickey Walker
Welterweight: Jimmy McLarnin
Junior Welterweight: Jack (Kid) Berg
Lightweight: Tony Canzoneri
Junior Lightweight: Benny Bass
Featherweight: Bat Battalino
Bantamweight: Panama Al Brown
Flyweight: Frankie Genaro

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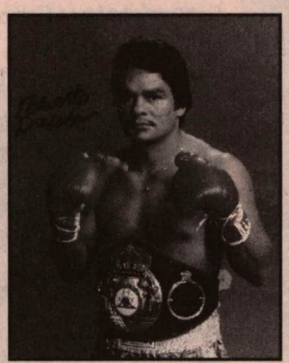

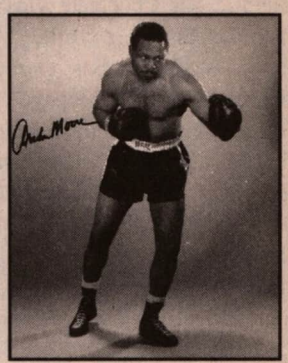

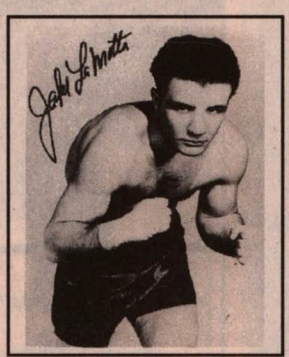

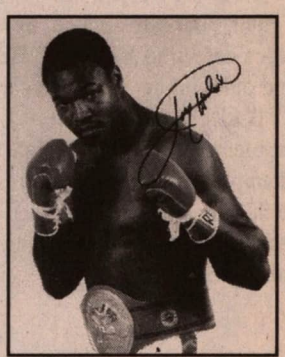

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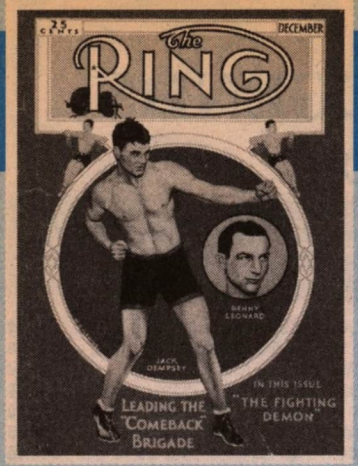


DECEMBER 1931

1931

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Max Schmeling KO 15 Young Stribling. At age 26, William Lawrence (Young) Stribling is a 265-fight veteran who has never been stopped. Challenging for the heavyweight championship, he gains an early lead, but takes a beating in the later rounds. In the 15th, Schmeling floors Stribling with a right to the jaw, and referee George Blake stops the bout with only 14 seconds remaining.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

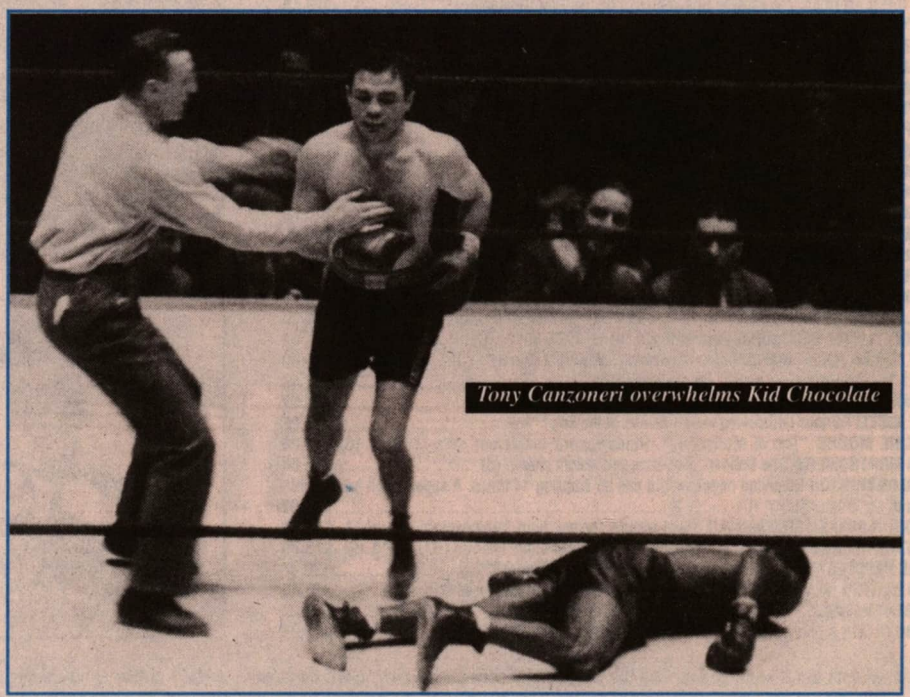
Tommy Loughran. Having rebounded from a kayo loss to Jack Sharkey in 1929, Loughran wins nine of 10 bouts, his only loss a controversial decision to King Levinsky. The centerpiece is his 10-round decision over Max Baer in February. A 5-2 underdog, Loughran keeps his jab in Baer's face, surviving a late rally for a unanimous decision win.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Mickey Walker D 15 Jack Sharkey. A 3-1 underdog, Walker, five inches shorter and 29 pounds lighter, hurts Sharkey with a hook to the jaw in the fourth and pounds him to the body. Sharkey cuts Walker's left eye and stuns him in the 13th, but the smaller man finishes strongly. Walker has to settle for a draw, despite the fact that referee Arthur Donovan sees him winning 11 rounds to four.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Tony Canzoneri-Jack (Kid) Berg (3). Junior welter champ Berg has already defeated lightweight boss Canzoneri in a non-title bout the year before. In the rematch, which sees both titles on the line, Berg trades evenly with Canzoneri through two rounds, but in the third is knocked cold by a single right to the jaw.



Tony Canzoneri overwhelms Kid Chocolate

It Also Happened

Young Stribling's streak of 18 consecutive kayos is halted by heavyweight champ Max Schmeling, who stops the Southern favorite in the 15th round … Kid Chocolate wins the junior lightweight title, dominating Benny Bass en route to a seventh-round stoppage … Former welter and middleweight king Mickey Walker gives away 29 pounds and holds top-ranked heavyweight contender Jack Sharkey to a 15-round draw … Sharkey also outpoints Italian contender Primo Carnera over 15 rounds … Tony Canzoneri becomes the world's best fighter, pound-for-pound, by twice defeating Jack (Kid) Berg and outpointing Kid Chocolate … Besieged by financial problems, former lightweight champ Benny Leonard returns to the ring after a seven-year retirement … Henry Armstrong turns pro.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Max Schmeling
Light Heavyweight: Maxie Rosenbloom
Middleweight: Gorilla Jones
Welterweight: Lou Brouillard
Junior Welterweight: Tony Canzoneri
Lightweight: Tony Canzoneri
Junior Lightweight: Kid Chocolate
Featherweight: Bat Battalino
Bantamweight: Panama Al Brown
Flyweight: Frankie Genaro

1932

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Tony Canzoneri W 15 Billy Petrolle. The veteran Petrolle, in his 151st fight, finally gets a shot at the lightweight title. He has already beaten Canzoneri two years earlier, but surgery to remove bone chips has weakened his left hook. Outboxed much of the way, Petrolle rallies late, hurting Canzoneri in the final round. Still, the champion retains the title by unanimous decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

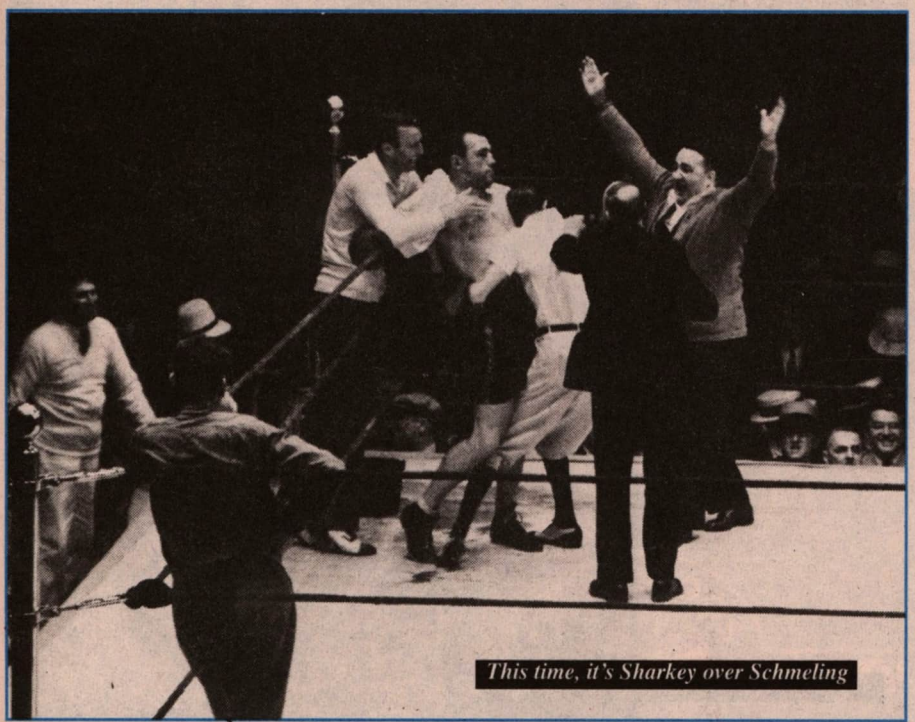
Jack Sharkey. A top contender for years, Sharkey's lone ring appearance sees him win a split 15-round decision and the heavyweight title from Max Schmeling. Sharkey, 30, advances to 36-8-3 (13).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Billy Petrolle KO 12 Bat Battalino. Former featherweight champ Battalino, having never been stopped in 55 fights, brawls with the veteran Petrolle. Battalino pounds away in the early rounds, but Petrolle hurts him with a right under the heart in the ninth. Battalino refuses to fall, and in the 12th, referee Arthur Donovan stops the bout. It is the only time in his career that Battalino fails to finish.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

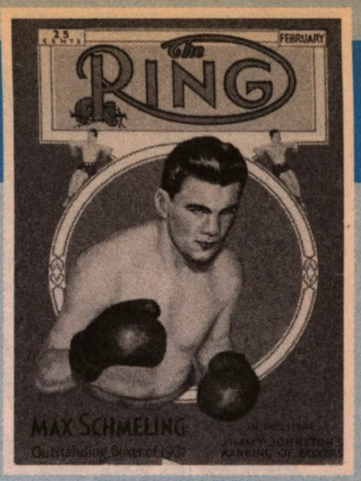
Max Schmeling-Mickey Walker (8). Down in the first, the undersized Walker battles back gamely. But in the eighth, Schmeling knocks out his mouthpiece and floors him three times. His left eye closed, and bleeding from the mouth and nose, Walker survives the stanza. Between rounds, his manager, Doc Kearns, calls a halt.



This time, it's Sharkey over Schmeling

THE BEST FIGHTERS

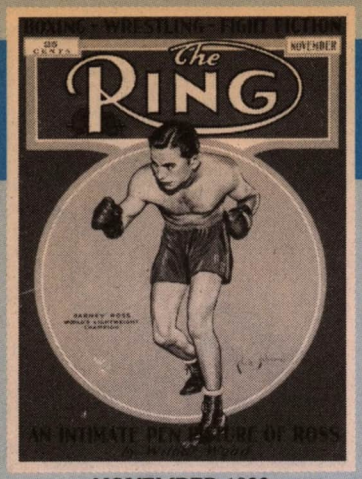
Heavyweight: Jack Sharkey
Light Heavyweight: Maxie Rosenbloom
Middleweight: Marcel Thil
Welterweight: Jackie Fields
Junior Welterweight: Johnny Jadick
Lightweight: Tony Canzoneri
Junior Lightweight: Kid Chocolate
Featherweight: Kid Chocolate
Bantamweight: Panama Al Brown
Flyweight: Jackie Brown



FEBRUARY 1932

It Also Happened

Benny Leonard's comeback ends when he falls in the sixth round to Jimmy McLarnin … Joe Jacobs, manager of Max Schmeling, screams, "We wuz robbed!" after Jack Sharkey outpoints his charge to win the world heavyweight title … After losing the crown, Schmeling scores an eighth-round stoppage of brave former welter and middleweight champion Mickey Walker … France's Marcel Thil wins the middleweight title when Gorilla Jones is DQ'd for holding and punching low.



NOVEMBER 1933

1933

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Max Baer KO 10 Max Schmeling. Despite a 12-fight winning streak, Baer is a 7-5 underdog to former heavyweight champion Schmeling. Baer stuns the German with his vaunted right hand in the first, but Schmeling comes back, bloodying Baer's nose to lead after eight. Baer hurts Schmeling in the ninth, then floors him in the 10th before the bout is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

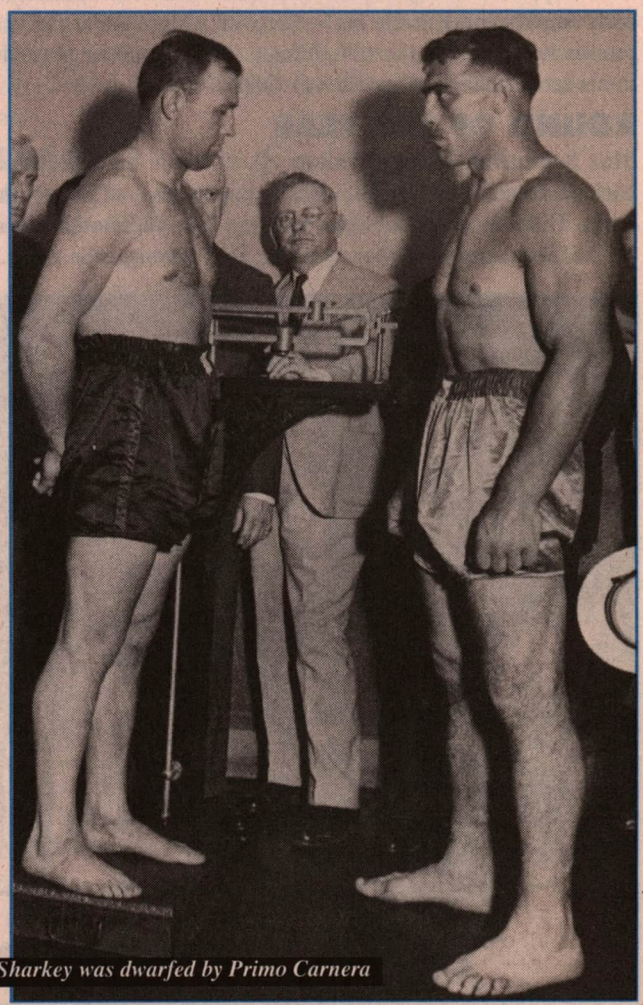
No award

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Primo Carnera KO 6 Jack Sharkey. An easy winner over Carnera in 1931, Sharkey wins four of the first five rounds. In the sixth, a right uppercut puts him on his face, making the Italian Goliath the new heavyweight champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Tony Canzoneri-Kid Chocolate (2). Canzoneri took a split decision from Chocolate in a lightweight title defense in 1931. In the rematch, they fight evenly through the first, but in the second Canzoneri hurts Chocolate with a right to the jaw, then puts him on his face with another right. It is Chocolate's first knockout defeat in 97 fights.



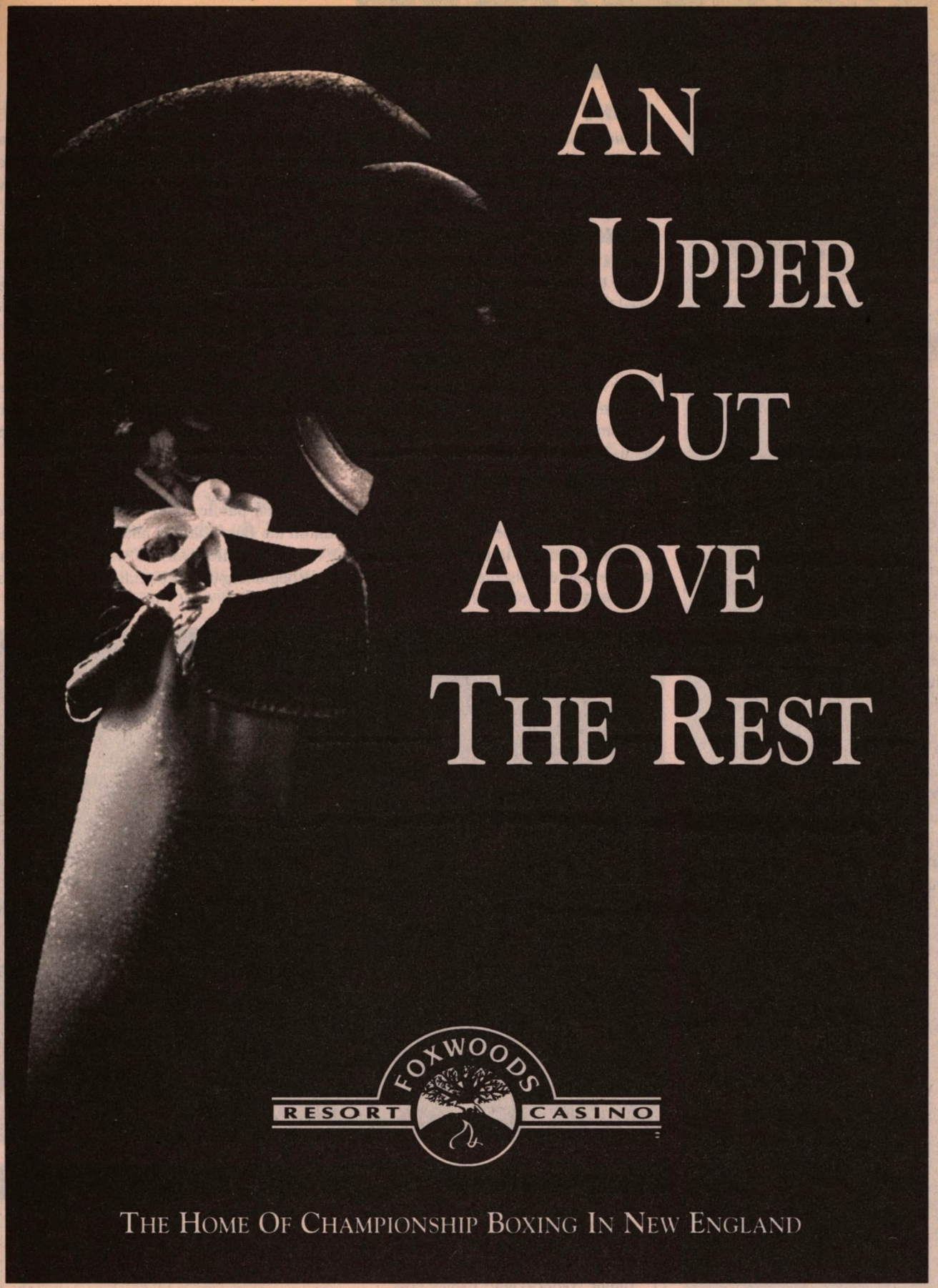
At their weigh-in, Jack Sharkey was dwarfed by Primo Carnera

It Also Happened

Max Baer jumps to the top of the heavyweight ratings with a 10th-round kayo of former world champ Max Schmeling … Italian giant Primo Carnera wins the heavyweight title with a surprise sixth-round kayo of Jack Sharkey … Irish-born Jimmy McLarnin takes the welter crown with a first-round demolition of Young Corbett III … Tony Canzoneri regains the junior welter title, but then loses twice in title fights to Chicago's Barney Ross … There is chaos in the middleweight division, with four different fighters winning world title fights of one kind or another … After dropping three bouts in a row, San Francisco's Frankie Klick captures the junior lightweight title with a seventh-round kayo of Kid Chocolate … Battling Shaw becomes the first-ever world champion from Mexico when he dethrones 140-pound king Johnny Jadick by 10-round decision.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Primo Carnera
Light Heavyweight: Maxie Rosenbloom
Middleweight: Teddy Yarosz
Welterweight: Jimmy McLarnin
Junior Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Barney Ross
Junior Lightweight: Kid Chocolate
Featherweight: Freddie Miller
Bantamweight: Panama Al Brown
Flyweight: Jackie Brown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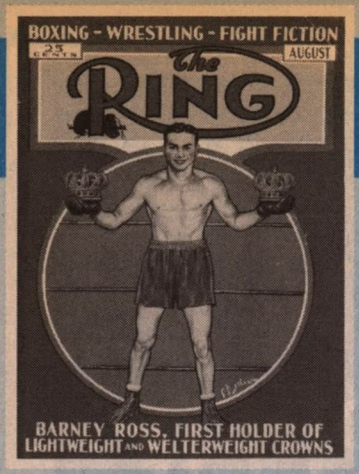


AUGUST 1934

1934

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Barney Ross W 15 Jimmy McLarnin. Welterweight champ McLarnin and junior welter king Ross duel for 15 rounds of pure action, the high point coming when Ross knocks down McLarnin in the ninth. The fight is close all the way, with Ross the winner and new 147-pound titlist by split decision.

FIGHTERS OF THE YEAR

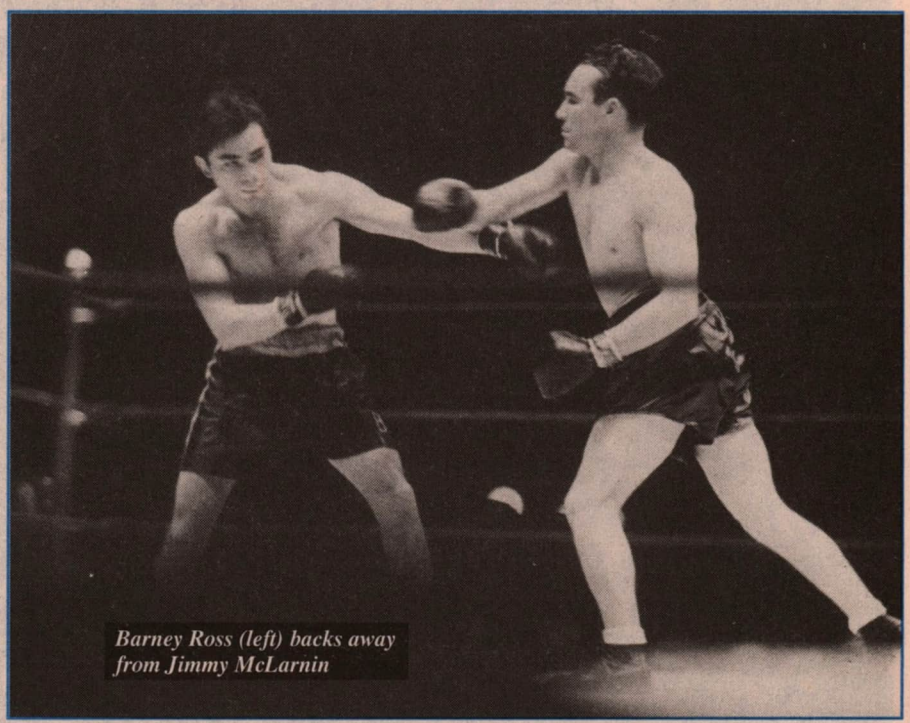
Tony Canzoneri & Barney Ross. Canzoneri wins five of six bouts, reversing a loss to Harry Dublinsky and knocking out Frankie Klick to advance to 103-15-8 (33). Ross makes four defenses of the junior welter title and wins, then loses, the welterweight title in two bouts with Jimmy McLarnin. He finishes the year at 54-3-3 (13).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Steve Hamas W 12 Max Schmeling. A former four-letter man and football All-American at Penn State, Hamas kayoed and decisioned former light heavyweight champion Tommy Loughran in 1932. His decisive victory over Schmeling propels him into top contender status among the heavyweights.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jimmy Braddock-Corn Griffin (2). Braddock, on public relief, comes out of near-retirement to face the highly regarded Griffin on the Baer-Carnera undercard. Shaken in the first and down in the second, Braddock rebounds to floor Griffin with a right to the jaw. He goes on to score a knockout in the third, beginning one of boxing's greatest career comebacks.



Barney Ross (left) backs away from Jimmy McLarnin

It Also Happened

Joe Louis turns pro … In a dull 15-rounder, heavyweight champ Primo Carnera keeps the crown by decision over former light heavy king Tommy Loughran. Carnera scales 270, Loughran 184; scoring 11 knockdowns in 11 rounds, Max Baer wins the heavyweight title with a crushing kayo of Carnera … Future hall of famers Barney Ross and Jimmy McLarnin trade the welterweight title, winning one 15-round split decision apiece … Sixto Escobar becomes the first world champ from Puerto Rico when he wins the vacant NBA bantam title with a ninth-round kayo of Baby Casanova.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Max Baer
Light Heavyweight: Bob Olin
Middleweight: Teddy Yarosz
Welterweight: Barney Ross
Junior Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Tony Canzoneri
Featherweight: Freddie Miller
Bantamweight: Sixto Escobar
Flyweight: Jackie Brown

THE BEST OF 1935

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis KO 4 Max Baer. In the biggest fight of his young career, Louis, just 21, faces former heavyweight champion Baer. Despite Baer's deadly right hand and advantages in height, weight, and reach, Louis rocks him late in the first, then floors him twice in the third before handing Baer his first knockout defeat in the fourth.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

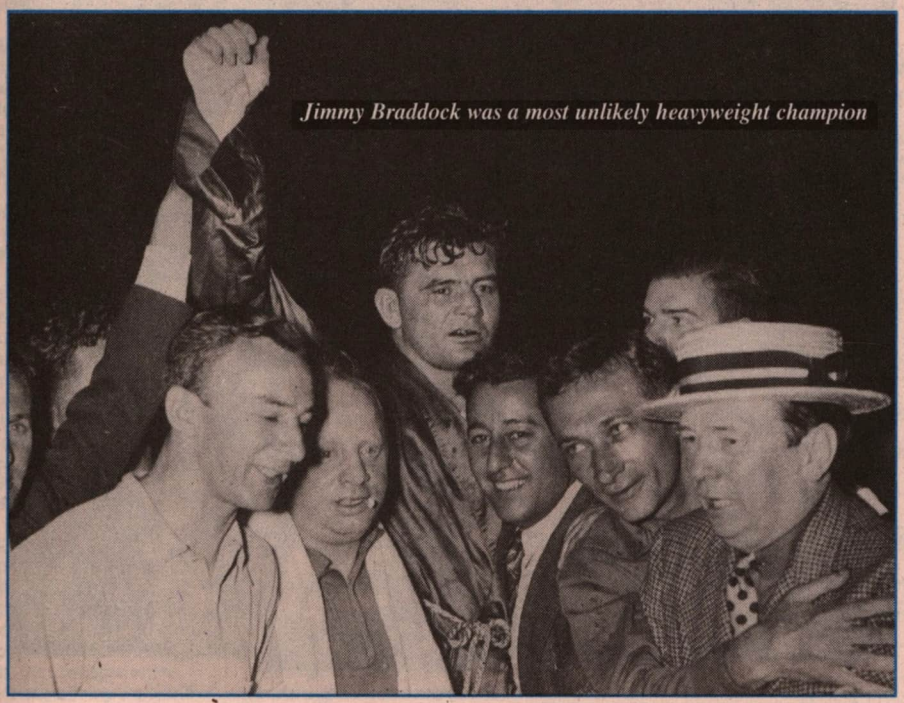
Barney Ross. Ross goes 6-0 for the year, twice defending the junior welterweight title before regaining the welter crown in his rubber match with Jimmy McLarnin. In a non-title fight in September, he gets off the deck twice in the first round to decision Ceferino Garcia, then defeats him again in November. His record at year's end: 60-3-2 (14).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Jimmy Braddock W 15 Max Baer. Based on kayos of Max Schmeling and Primo Carnera, heavyweight champion Baer is a 10-1 favorite. Braddock has scored upset wins over Corn Griffin, John Henry Lewis, and Art Lasky, but no one gives him a chance. Scoring with jabs and straight rights, Braddock piles up the points, then holds off a late Baer rally for the decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Paulino Uzcudun (4). In 69 fights, "The Basque Woodchopper" has never been stopped or even floored. Louis is cautious before unloading with a right that drives Uzcudun's teeth through his mouthpiece and upper lip. Flat on his back, Uzcudun somehow pulls himself up with the help of the ropes. The bout is stopped moments later.



Jimmy Braddock was a most unlikely heavyweight champion

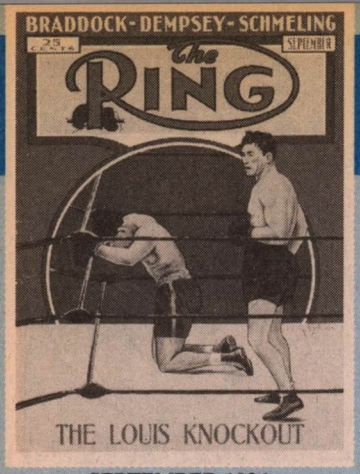
THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Max Baer
Light Heavyweight: John Henry Lewis
Middleweight: Marcel Thil
Welterweight: Barney Ross
Junior Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Tony Canzoneri
Featherweight: Freddie Miller
Bantamweight: Baltazar Sangchili
Flyweight: Benny Lynch

APRIL 1935

It Also Happened

In the greatest heavyweight upset in the 45 years of the modern era, Jimmy Braddock, who enters the ring with 24 losses, outpoints Max Baer over 15 rounds … Spain claims its first world champ when Baltazar Sangchili outpoints long-reigning bantam boss Panama Al Brown over 15 rounds … For the second time in two months, featherweight Baby Arizmendi decisions Henry Armstrong … Barney Ross regains the welter title, winning his rubber match by unanimous 15-round verdict over Jimmy McLarnin … Scotland's masterful Benny Lynch wins the NBA flyweight crown, demolishing Jackie Brown in two rounds … Bob Olin takes a beating in losing the light heavy title to John Henry Lewis by 15-round decision.



SEPTEMBER 1936

1936

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Max Schmeling KO 12 Joe Louis. Louis is unbeaten in 23 fights, with 19 knockouts. He wins the first three rounds, but Schmeling, noticing that Louis brings his left hand back low after jabbing, floors him with a right to the jaw in the fourth, then scores repeatedly with the same punch before knocking out "The Brown Bomber" in the 12th.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

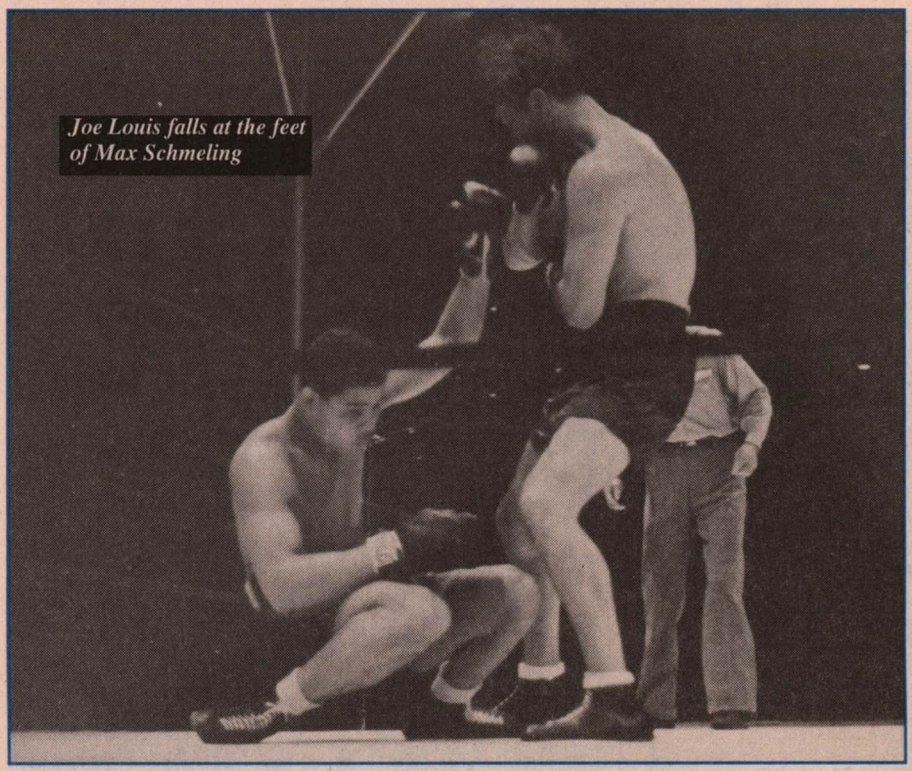
Joe Louis. Suffering a knockout loss to Max Schmeling in June, Louis finishes the year at 27-1 (23). After the Schmeling bout, he kayos former champion Jack Sharkey in three, Al Ettore in five, Jorge Brescia in three, and ends the year with a 14-second knockout of Eddie Simms.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Max Schmeling KO 12 Joe Louis. Louis is an 8-1 favorite when the heavyweights clash at Yankee Stadium. Most figure Schmeling will be an early knockout victim, but he repeatedly hurts Louis with rights to the jaw, floors him in the fourth, and has the left side of Louis' face badly swollen when he applies the finisher in the 12th.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Tony Marino-Baltazar Sangchili (14). Bantamweight champion Sangchili floors Marino in the first and is far ahead on points after 13 rounds. In the 14th, a desperate Marino unloads everything he has left and kayos Sangchili to win the title.



Joe Louis falls at the feet of Max Schmeling

It Also Happened

Finishing his career with points wins over future hall of famers Tony Canzoneri and Lou Ambers, Jimmy McLarnin retires at age 29 … In a shocker, heavyweight Joe Louis, 23-0, and thought to be a sure bet for the championship, suffers three knockdowns en route to a 12th-round kayo loss to former world champ Max Schmeling … Petey Sarron ends the five-year reign of featherweight titlist Freddie Miller by winning a 15-round decision … Henry Armstrong avenges a pair of defeats by decisioning Baby Arizmendi over 10 rounds … Waiting for a big payday, heavyweight champ Jimmy Braddock fails to defend the title.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: John Henry Lewis
Middleweight: Babe Risko
Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Lou Ambers
Featherweight: Henry Armstrong
Bantamweight: Sixto Escobar
Flyweight: Benny Lynch

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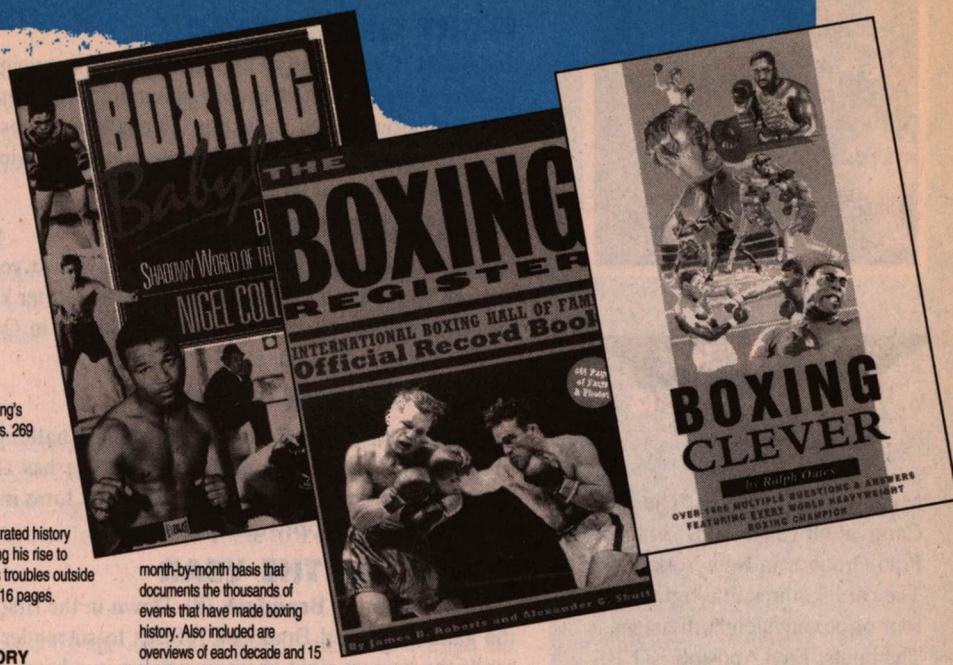

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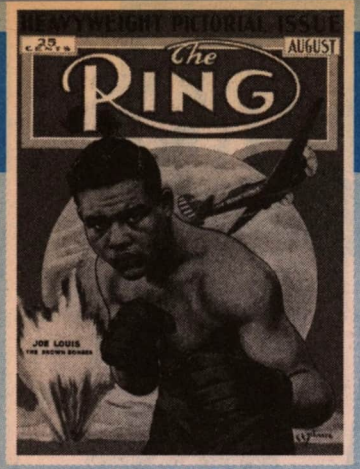


AUGUST 1937

1937

It Also Happened

Mike Jacobs promotes "The Carnival Of Champions" at the Polo Grounds in New York City. The card features title fights in four of boxing's eight divisions. The bouts: Fred Apostoli KO 10 Marcel Thil (middleweight), Barney Ross W 15 Ceferino Garcia (welterweight), Lou Ambers W 15 Pedro Montanez (lightweight), and Harry Jeffra W 15 Sixto Escobar (bantamweight) … Joe Louis wins the heavyweight title, rising from the floor to stop Jimmy Braddock in eight rounds … Henry Armstrong wins his first world title, halting featherweight king Petey Sarron in six rounds … Benny Lynch unifies the flyweight title by outpointing Small Montana over 15 rounds.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis W 15 Tommy Farr. In his first heavyweight title defense, Louis is a 5-1 favorite to defeat Farr, the British Empire champion who is making his American fistic debut. Louis cuts Farr around both eyes, but the challenger, absorbing everything Louis can unload, gamely fights back. At the end, Louis gets the unanimous decision, but Farr gets the cheers for having remained on his feet.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

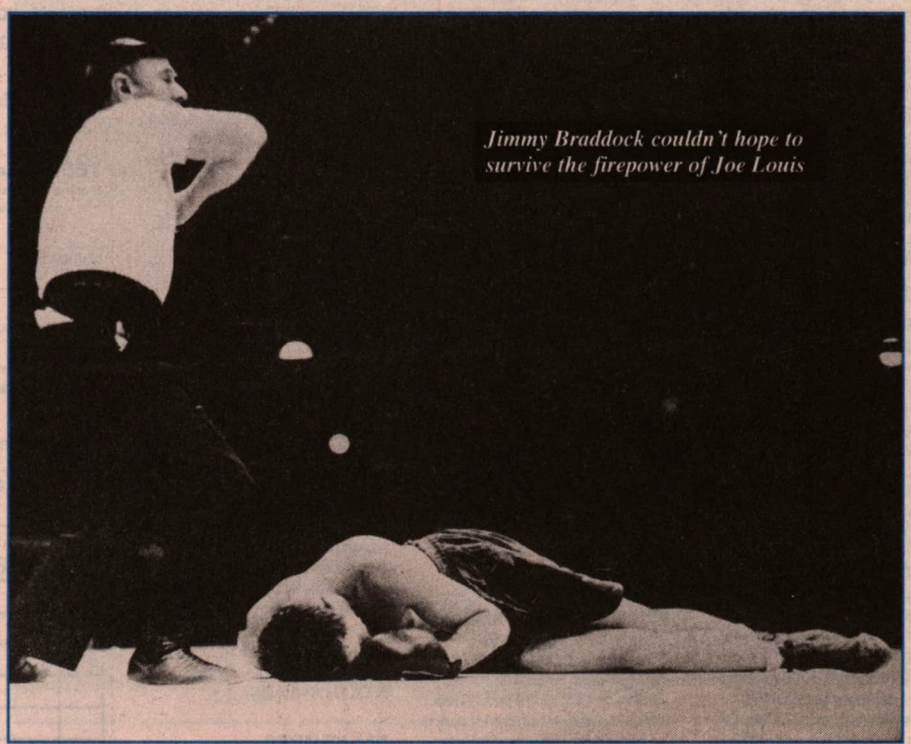
Henry Armstrong. In what may be the greatest year of any fighter's career, Armstrong wins an incredible 27 fights, 26 by knockout. After kayos of Mike Belloise, Frankie Klick, and Benny Bass, he knocks out Petey Sarron in October to win the featherweight title. Armstrong ends the year at 73-10-6 (49).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lou Ambers W 15 Pedro Montanez. Challenging for Ambers' lightweight title, Montanez enters the ring at 64-3-4 (35). He has also beaten Ambers in a non-title 10-rounder earlier in the year. Ambers, however, turns in a career-best performance, outboxing Montanez for a majority decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Jimmy Braddock (8). Down in the first, Louis takes control in the third. But the game, bloodied Braddock refuses to surrender until the eighth, when a right cross sends the heavyweight champion down in a heap. It is the beginning of one of boxing's greatest eras.



Jimmy Braddock couldn't hope to survive the firepower of Joe Louis

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: John Henry Lewis
Middleweight: Freddie Steele
Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Lou Ambers
Featherweight: Henry Armstrong
Bantamweight: Sixto Escobar
Flyweight: Benny Lynch

1938

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Henry Armstrong W 15 Lou Ambers. Already featherweight and welterweight champ, Armstrong floors lightweight king Ambers twice and has him near a knockout at the end of the fifth. Ambers rallies late, closing Armstrong's left eye and badly cutting his mouth, but the challenger takes the split decision. He becomes the only fighter to hold three world titles simultaneously.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

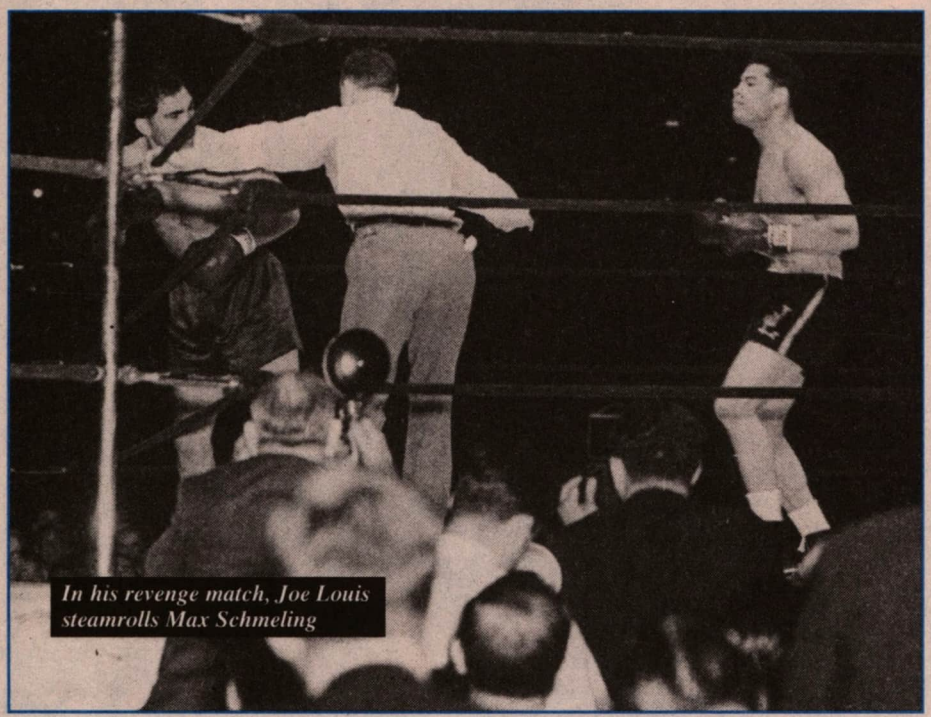
Joe Louis. Louis defends the heavyweight title by knocking out Nathan Mann (KO 3) and Harry Thomas (KO 5), but it is his one-round demolition of Max Schmeling in their rematch that earns "The Brown Bomber" honors not just for the year, but for all-time. Louis finishes the year at 34-1 (29).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Max Baer W 15 Tommy Farr. Farr enters Yankee Stadium not only having gone 15 rounds with Louis, but also having beaten Baer in 12 rounds the year before. Considered washed-up, Baer shocks the experts, flooring Farr in the sixth (it is the first knockdown of Farr's career) and staggering him in the final round en route to a unanimous decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Max Schmeling (1). A round for the ages. Louis, determined to avenge his only loss, and angered at Nazi Germany having touted Schmeling as an example of Aryan supremacy, tears into the challenger, fracturing two vertebrae in his back and flooring him three times before referee Arthur Donovan stops the bout at the 2:04 mark.



In his revenge match, Joe Louis steamrolls Max Schmeling

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: John Henry Lewis
Middleweight: Fred Apostoli
Welterweight: Henry Armstrong
Lightweight: Henry Armstrong
Featherweight: Leo Rodak
Bantamweight: Sixto Escobar
Flyweight: Benny Lynch

SEPTEMBER 1938

It Also Happened

Henry Armstrong makes history by adding the lightweight and welterweight titles to his featherweight crown; he is the first fighter to simultaneously hold world titles at three different weights … In a showdown with ramifications that transcend the ring, heavyweight king Joe Louis avenges his only pro loss by crushing Max Schmeling in one devastating round … After losing the welter title to Armstrong, triple-crown champ Barney Ross, 28, retires … Flyweight boss Benny Lynch gives up the world title on the scales before his 12th-round kayo of Jackie Jurich. Lynch fights only twice more … Big puncher Al Hostak breaks both his hands in losing the NBA middleweight title to Solly Krieger.

DECEMBER 1939

1939

It Also Happened

Never scaling more than 141½ pounds, welter king Henry Armstrong successfully defends an incredible 11 times … Heavyweight champ Joe Louis crushes light heavy titlist John Henry Lewis in one round. Later in the year, "The Brown Bomber" rises from the canvas to demolish "Two-Ton" Tony Galento in four. Then, in the last world title bout scheduled for more than 15 rounds, Louis halts Bob Pastor in 11. (The bout was scheduled for 20 rounds.) … Pittsburgh's Billy Conn wins the vacant world light heavyweight title, outpointing Melio Bettina … Al Hostak regains the NBA middleweight crown, stopping Solly Krieger in four … Lou Ambers regains the lightweight title, decisioning Armstrong over 15 rounds.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis KO 11 Bob Pastor. In a scheduled 20-round heavyweight title fight, Louis floors Pastor four times in the first two rounds. Fighting his way back, Pastor stuns the champion in the eighth before Louis coldcocks him with a right to the jaw in the 11th.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis. "The Brown Bomber" goes four-for-four, all knockouts, halting former light heavyweight champ John Henry Lewis and Jack Roper, both in one, Tony Galento, and Bob Pastor. He advances to 38-1 (33).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lou Ambers W 15 Henry Armstrong. "Hurricane Hank" defends the welterweight title 11 times during the year, but in his lightweight title fight rematch with Ambers, he loses five rounds because of low blows. Ambers takes a close but unanimous decision to regain the crown.

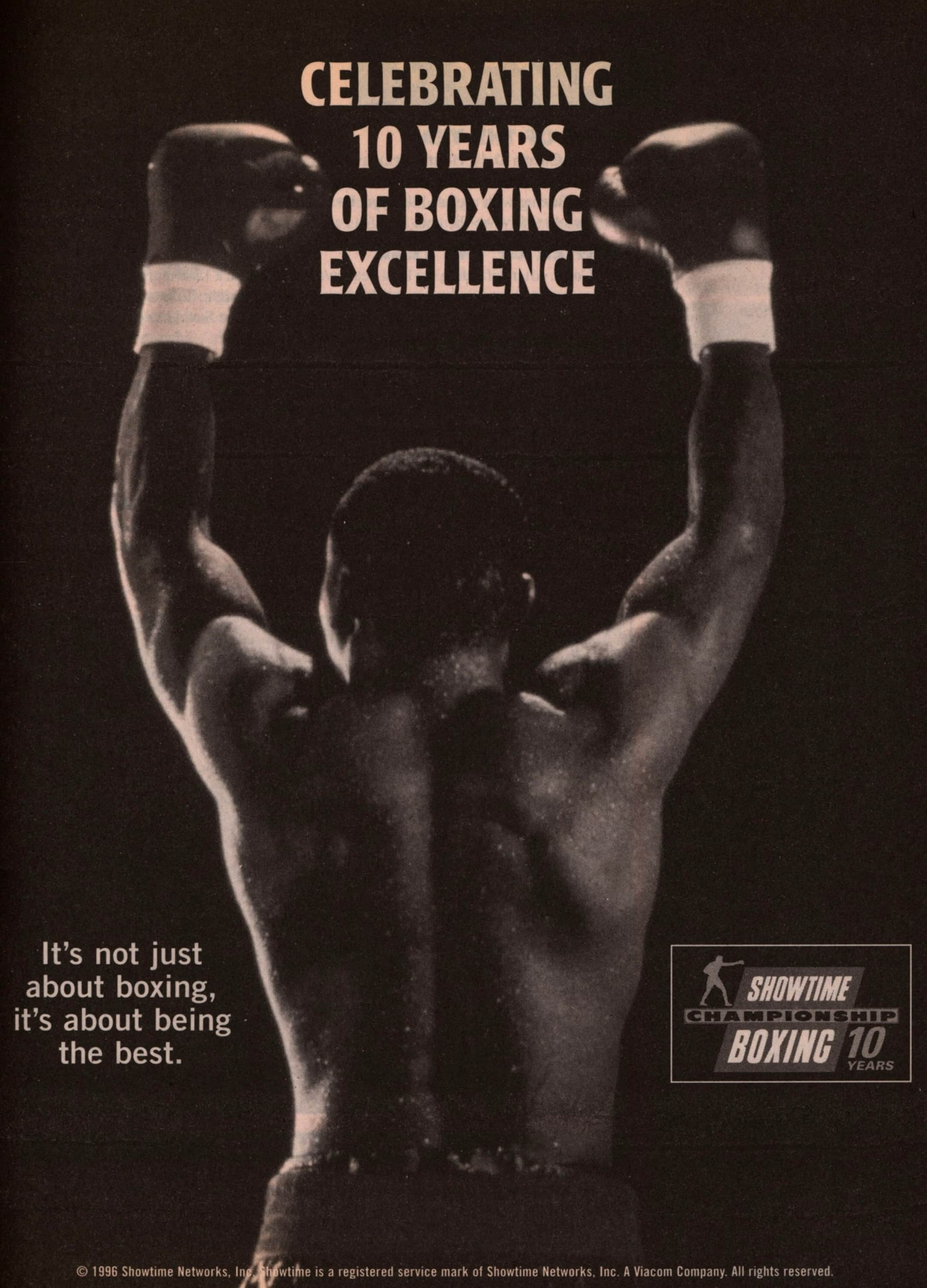
ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Tony Galento (3). "Two-Ton Tony," a bartender in New Jersey, is a 10-1 underdog, yet he rocks the heavyweight champion in the first. Down in the second and taking a pounding in the third, the challenger floors a surprised Louis with a hook to the jaw. Up quickly, Louis goes on to stop Galento in the fourth.

Was there ever a tougher loser than Tony Galento?

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Billy Conn
Middleweight: Ceferino Garcia
Welterweight: Henry Armstrong
Lightweight: Lou Ambers
Featherweight: Joey Archibald
Bantamweight: Sixto Escobar
Flyweight: Little Dado



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FEBRUARY 1940

1940

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Ceferino Garcia D 10 Henry Armstrong. Having defended the welter title 15 times, Armstrong challenges middleweight champion Garcia, whom he defeated at 147 pounds in 1938. Boxing with a closed left eye, he cuts Garcia and dominates, but is denied his fourth world title when the bout is judged a draw.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Billy Conn. After defending the light heavyweight title with a 15-round decision over Gus Lesnevich, Conn vacates the crown. Moving up to heavyweight, he knocks out Bob Pastor in 13 rounds and defeats Henry Cooper, Al McCoy, and Lee Savold to go to 54-9-1 (8).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

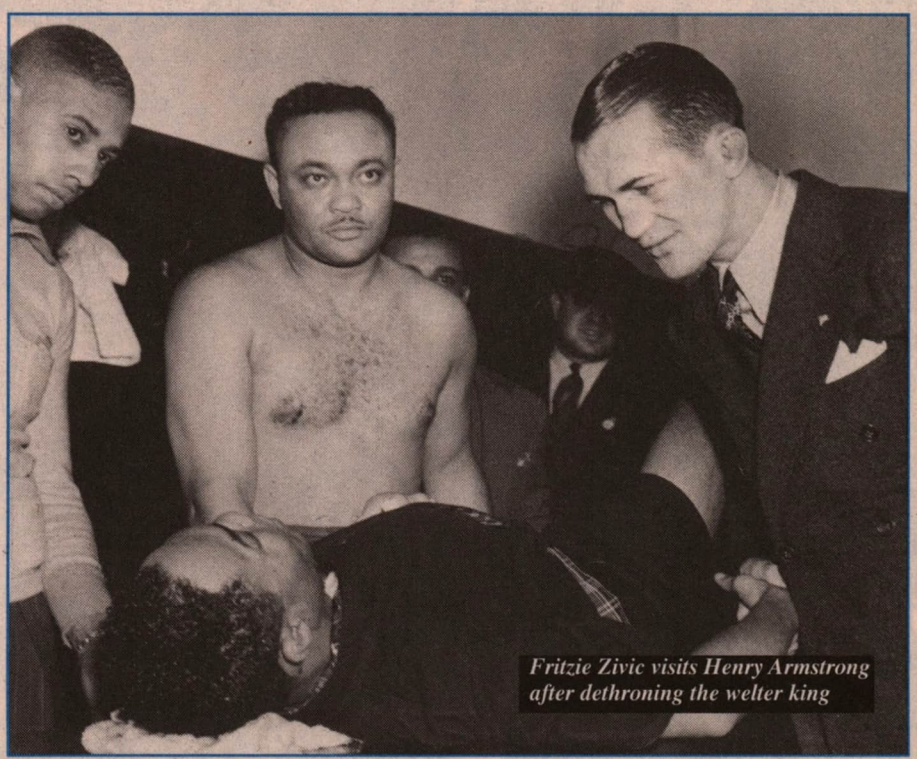
Fritzie Zivic W 15 Henry Armstrong. Having made 19 defenses, welter champ Armstrong is a 4-1 favorite. But the challenger outboxes Armstrong at long range, uppercuts him in close, and floors him with a right to the jaw just before the final bell for the decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Lew Jenkins-Lou Ambers (3). Lightweight champion Ambers, seldom down and having never been kayoed, is dropped in the first and second rounds. In the third, Jenkins unloads his power-laden right to the jaw, flooring Ambers twice more and having him helpless when the bout is halted.

It Also Happened

Light heavy champ Billy Conn fights four bouts at heavyweight and wins all of them, clearing the way for a shot at world titlist Joe Louis; "The Brown Bomber" defends four times, defeating Arturo Godoy (twice), Johnny Paychek, and Al McCoy … Triple-crown titlist Henry Armstrong is denied a fourth title when his 10-rounder with middleweight king Ceferino Garcia is ruled a draw; in a shocker, frequent loser Fritzie Zivic outpoints Armstrong and wins the welter crown … Tony Zale takes the NBA middleweight title, halting Al Hostak in 13 … Lew Jenkins, a lightweight with a punch as big as his native Texas, wins the world title, crushing Lou Ambers in three rounds … Sugar Ray Robinson, Willie Pep, and Ike Williams turn pro.

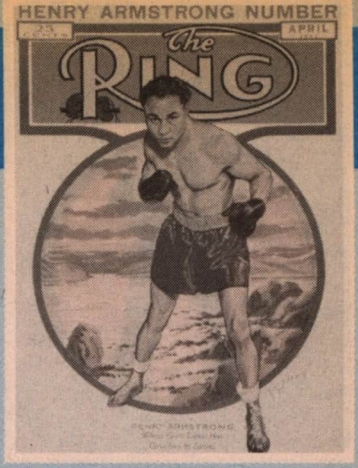


Fritzie Zivic visits Henry Armstrong after dethroning the welter king

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Billy Conn
Middleweight: Tony Zale
Welterweight: Henry Armstrong
Lightweight: Lew Jenkins
Featherweight: Harry Jeffra
Bantamweight: Lou Salica
Flyweight: Jackie Paterson

1941



APRIL 1941

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis KO 13 Billy Conn. Making his 18th defense, and sixth of the year, Louis struggles with the smaller but quicker former light heavyweight champion. Surviving a rocky fifth round, Conn rallies to outbox Louis through 12, staggering him with a hook to the jaw. Behind on two cards, Louis comes back to kayo Conn with two seconds remaining in the 13th.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

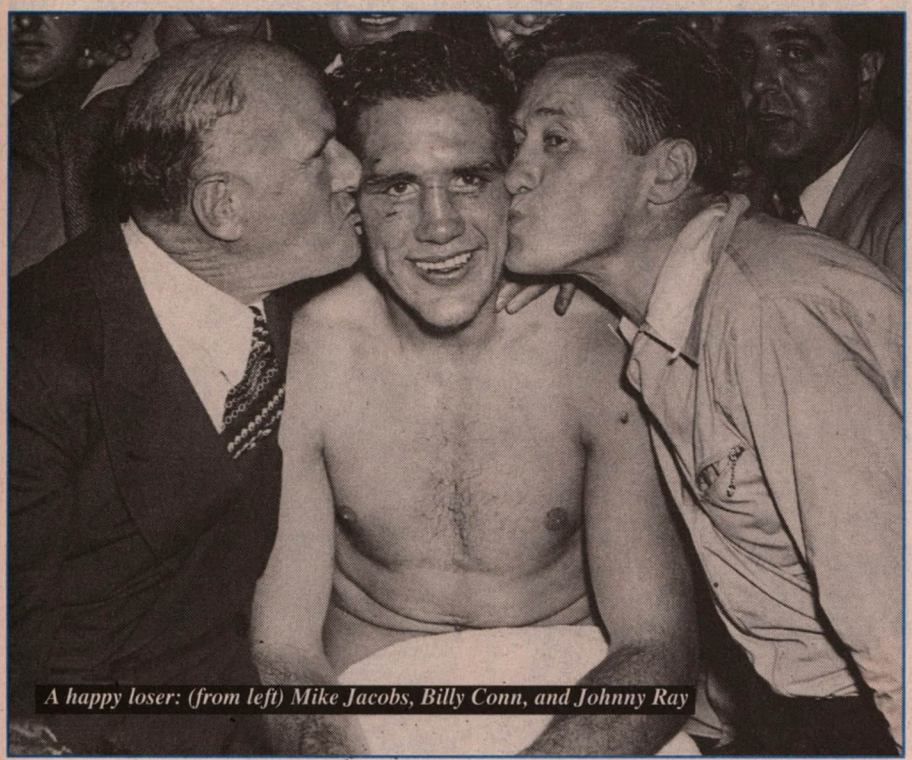
Joe Louis. "The Brown Bomber" scores a record seven heavyweight title defenses (six by knockout), including kayos of Red Burman, Abe Simon, Lou Nova, and Billy Conn, the last a come-from-behind effort regarded as one of boxing's classics. Louis finishes the year at 49-1 (41).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Freddie (Red) Cochrane W 15 Fritzie Zivic. The two-time conqueror of Henry Armstrong, Zivic is a 139-fight veteran and a 4-1 favorite over Cochrane, who has lost 30 fights. The challenger wears down Zivic with a body attack, winning a unanimous decision and the welterweight title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Billy Conn (13). Behind early and shaken in the fifth, Conn rallies to lead through 12. Conn comes out for the 13th determined to kayo Louis, but after having the better of several exchanges, Louis hurts him with three rights to the head, then drops him for the full count with two seconds remaining in the round.



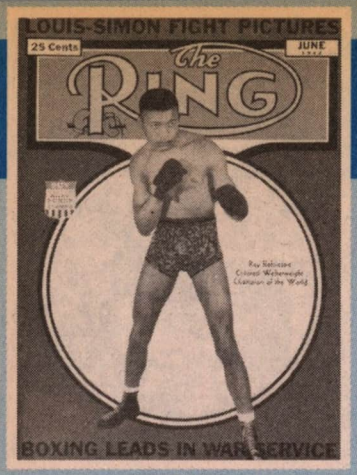
A happy loser: (from left) Mike Jacobs, Billy Conn, and Johnny Ray

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Gus Lesnevich
Middleweight: Tony Zale
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Sammy Angott
Featherweight: Chalky Wright
Bantamweight: Lou Salica
Flyweight: Jackie Paterson

It Also Happened

Heavyweight king Joe Louis makes seven successful defenses, including a dramatic, come-from-behind 13th-round kayo of former light heavy champ Billy Conn … Gus Lesnevich unifies the light heavy title, outpointing NBA champ Anton Christoforidis over 15 rounds … Welter champ Fritzie Zivic repeats his win over Henry Armstrong, scoring a 12th-round stoppage. It is the last title fight of Armstrong's career … Sammy "The Clutch" Angott clinches his way to the lightweight title, outpointing frustrated powerpuncher Lew Jenkins over 15 rounds. For Jenkins, it is the second of what would become nine consecutive losses … Jake LaMotta turns pro.



JUNE 1942

1942

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Willlie Pep W 15 Chalky Wright. Just 20, but having already registered 54 victories without a defeat, Pep faces featherweight champ Wright, a 156-fight veteran and a dangerous puncher. Moving in and out, Pep refuses to let Wright unload anything damaging. The unanimous decision marks the beginning of Pep's six-year reign.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

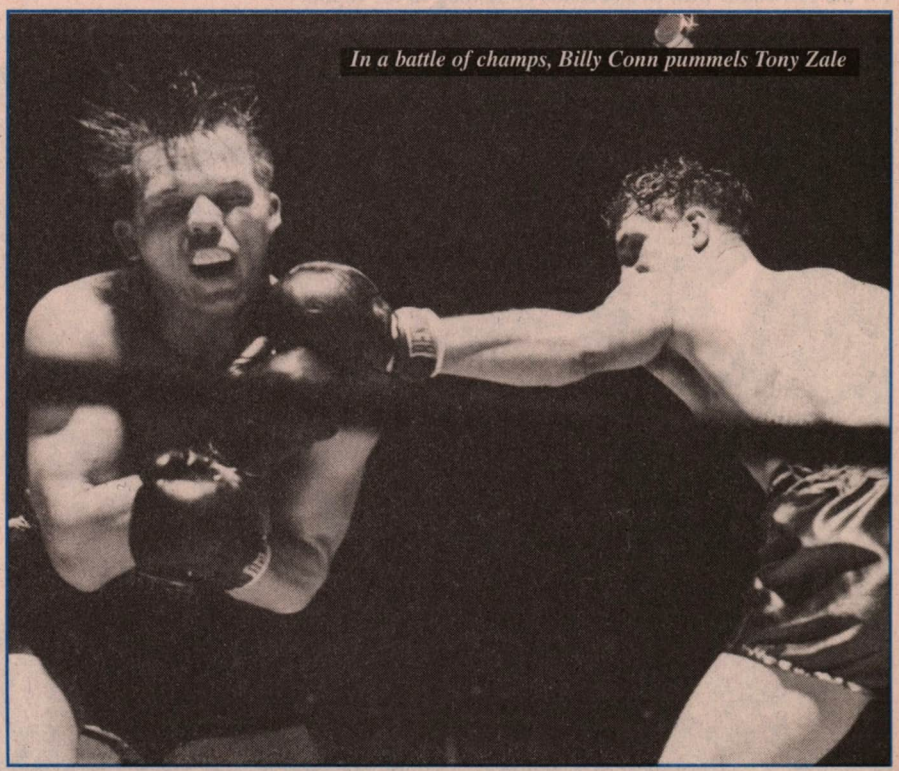
Sugar Ray Robinson. In just his third year as a pro, the 21-year-old Robinson goes 14-0, beginning with a 10th-round stoppage of former welterweight champ Fritzie Zivic, and including decisions over future titlists Marty Servo and, in the first of their six bouts, Jake LaMotta. Robinson finishes the year at 40-0 (29).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lee Savold KO 8 Lou Nova. Despite having been kayoed by Joe Louis in a heavyweight title fight the year before, Nova is still a highly regarded contender, having scored victories over Max Baer, Tommy Farr, and Pat Comiskey. Savold stuns the favored Nova, however, bloodying his mouth and nose and battering him until the bout is stopped in the eighth.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Buddy Baer (1). Before his rematch with Baer, heavyweight champ Louis promises his ailing trainer, Jack Blackburn, he'll have to climb the ring steps only once. Sure enough, he keeps his promise, flooring hulking challenger Baer four times and knocking him out at 2:56 of the first round.



In a battle of champs, Billy Conn pummels Tony Zale

It Also Happened

In their last bouts before serving in World War II, Billy Conn outpoints middleweight champ Tony Zale in a non-title affair … Heavyweight champ Joe Louis defends twice, kayoing Buddy Baer and Abe Simon, then enlists in the Army … Beau Jack emerges as one of the best fighters of the war years; he wins the vacant New York world lightweight title by crushing Tippy Larkin in three rounds … Sugar Ray Robinson wins all 14 of his bouts, defeating, among others, Jake LaMotta, Marty Servo, Fritzie Zivic, and, in a non-title bout, lightweight champ Sammy Angott; Angott, 27, announces his retirement one fight after losing to Robinson, only to return two months later … Veteran California battler Manuel Ortiz wins the bantam crown, outpointing Lou Salica over 12 rounds.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Freddie Mills
Middleweight: Tony Zale
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Beau Jack
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Jackie Paterson

1943

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Beau Jack W 15 Bob Montgomery. In May, Montgomery defeats Jack over 15 rounds for the lightweight title. In their November rematch, Jack starts quickly, throwing punches in bunches until he tires late in the bout. Montgomery hurts Jack in the 14th and 15th, but the challenger hangs on to regain the lightweight title by unanimous decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

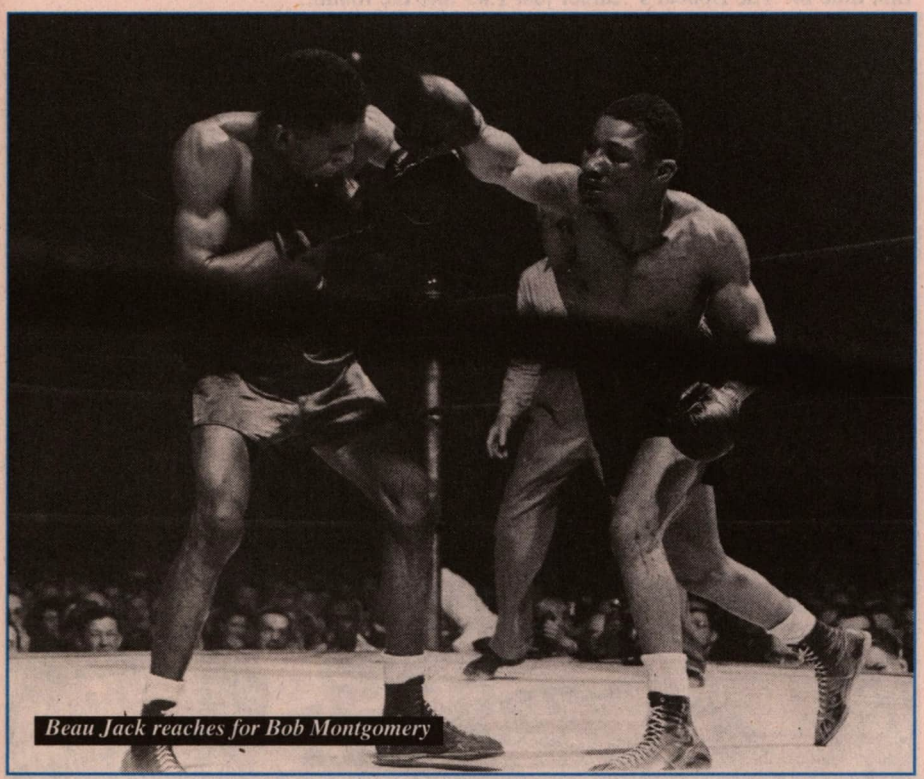
Fred Apostoli. Former middleweight champ Apostoli doesn't fight at all in 1943. As a member of the U. S. Navy, he boxes exhibitions throughout the USA for the war effort. Apostoli stays in the Navy until 1945, then resumes his pro career the following year.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Jake LaMotta W 10 Sugar Ray Robinson. Robinson, who defeated LaMotta over 10 rounds the previous October, is a 3-1 favorite in the rematch. Behind after seven, LaMotta floors Robinson late in the eighth; the bell saves Sugar Ray from a knockout. LaMotta has Robinson hurt in the 10th and is rewarded with a unanimous decision victory. The loss is the first of Robinson's career.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jackie Paterson-Peter Kane (1). Flyweight champion Kane hasn't defended since winning the crown in 1938. Paterson, a hard-punching southpaw from Scotland, goes at the champion from the opening bell, hurting Kane quickly, then finishing him with a terrific hook to the jaw just 61 seconds into the round.



Beau Jack reaches for Bob Montgomery

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Gus Lesnevich
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Beau Jack
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Jackie Paterson

APRIL 1943

It Also Happened

Jake LaMotta and Sugar Ray Robinson meet for the second and third times, with each winning once. Robinson's loss is his first in 41 bouts. As it turns out, he won't lose again for eight years. Robinson also scores a 10-round points win over his idol, the aging Henry Armstrong … En route to a record-setting reign, Manuel Ortiz makes eight defenses of the bantam crown … Arch-rivals Bob Montgomery and Beau Jack trade the New York world lightweight title … Jimmy Bivins establishes himself as the best big man of the war years, defeating, among others, Ezzard Charles, Lloyd Marshall, Tami Mauriello, and Melio Bettina … Kid Gavilan turns pro.

APRIL 1944

1944

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Bob Montgomery W 15 Beau Jack. Their third meeting is a carbon copy of the previous two, except that Montgomery comes on in the middle rounds, outbrawling Jack from long range and proving stronger at the finish. This time the decision is split, with Montgomery regaining the lightweight crown.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Beau Jack. Despite losing the lightweight title back to Bob Montgomery in March, Jack goes 5-1-1 for the year, drawing with Sammy Angott and defeating Al (Bummy) Davis, NBA champion Juan Zurita, and, in August, Montgomery. The Montgomery bout is a non-title affair for which the price of admission is a war bond. The crowd of 15,822 produces an all-time record gate of $35,864,000. Afterward, both Jack and Montgomery enlist in the Army.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

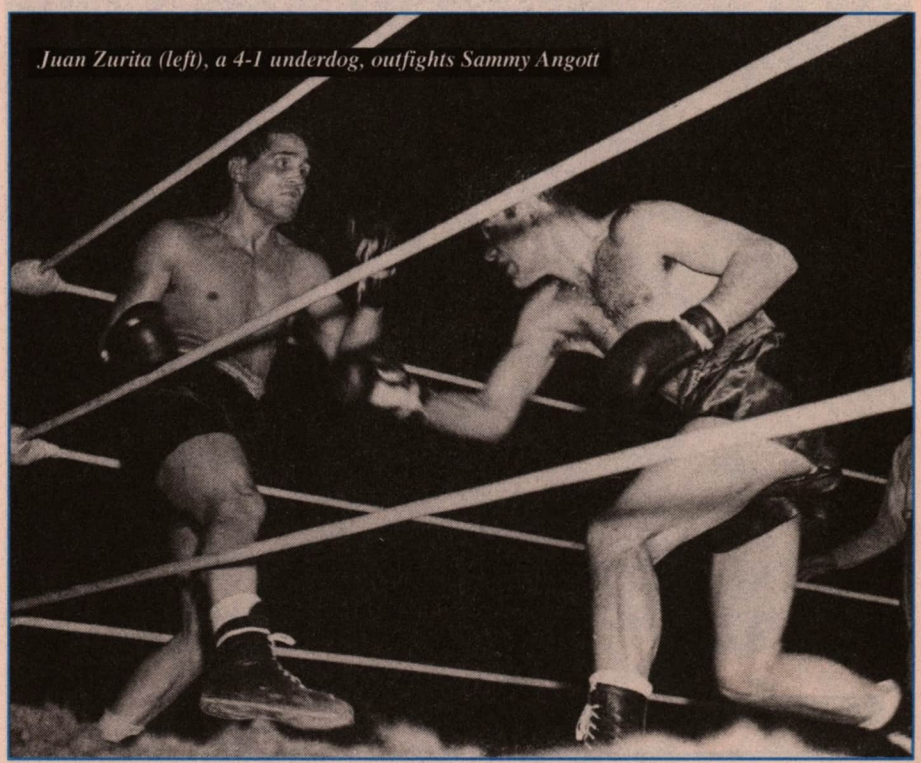
Juan Zurita W 15 Sammy Angott. Little known outside of Mexico and California, Zurita challenges NBA lightweight champion Angott. A 4-1 underdog, Zurita repeatedly nails the champion with rights to the jaw, hurting him several times. Angott holds on until the final bell, but the decision and the title go to Zurita.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Al (Bummy) Davis-Bob Montgomery (1). The bout is a tuneup for Montgomery, who challenges for the lightweight title just two weeks later. A wild-swinging welterweight with a wicked left hook, Davis shocks Montgomery, flooring and stopping him for the first time in "The Bobcat's" career just 1:45 into the round.

It Also Happened

In the last chapter of their four-fight series, lightweights Beau Jack and Bob Montgomery headline a card at Madison Square Garden that raises $35,864,000 for the war effort. It is the biggest live gate in boxing history. Jack wins a lackluster 10-round decision in the non-title affair. Five months before, Montgomery had regained the New York world title, outpointing Jack over 15 rounds. In all four of their bouts, the underdog emerged triumphant … In a brutal lightweight bout, Montgomery stops rising youngster Ike Williams in 11 rounds … Mexican southpaw Juan Zurita wins the NBA lightweight title, decisioning Sammy Angott over 15 rounds … Manuel Ortiz defends the bantam title four times … Sandy Saddler turns pro.



Juan Zurita (left), a 4-1 underdog, outfights Sammy Angott

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Lloyd Marshall
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Bob Montgomery
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: No selection

1945

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Rocky Graziano KO 10 Freddie Cochrane. Welterweight champ Cochrane is far ahead on points after eight rounds of a non-title fight. With only seconds remaining in the ninth, Graziano floors him with a right flush on the chin. The bell saves Cochrane, but just seconds into the 10th, Graziano drops him for the full count.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

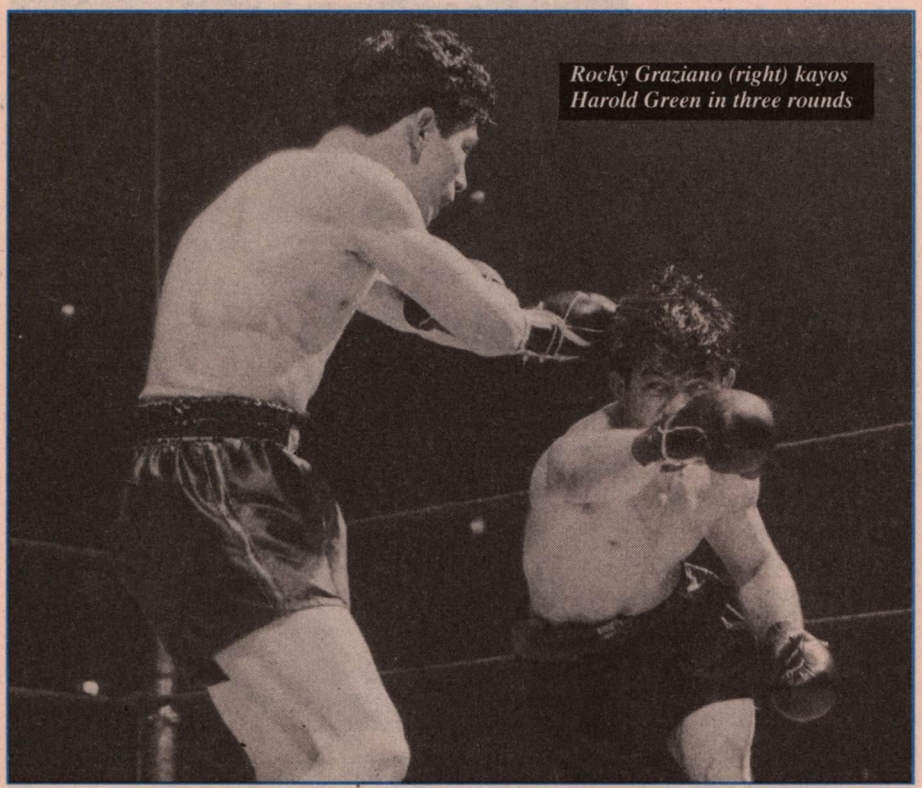
Willie Pep. Featherweight champion Pep goes 7-0-1, including a 15-round title fight decision over Phil Terranova in February. Pep enlists in the Army, then resumes his career at the end of the war. He finishes the year at 90-1-1 (26).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Rocky Graziano KO 3 Billy Arnold. Welterweight sensation Arnold is a 7-1 favorite over Graziano, who is coming off his second straight decision loss to Harold Green and has registered a mark of 1-2-2 in his previous five bouts. For two rounds Arnold pounds and bloodies Graziano. In the third, Rocky unloads a right that puts Arnold through the ropes, then floors him twice more before the fight is stopped.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

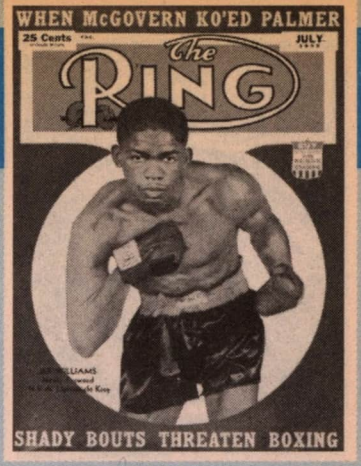
Willie Joyce-Ike Williams (12). In the rematch of a January bout won by Williams, Joyce leads going into the final round. The two are battling toe-to-toe when Joyce unloads a right to the jaw that buckles his opponent's knees. With Williams against the ropes, Joyce unleashes a barrage of rights. Williams escapes a kayo, but Joyce gets the decision.



Rocky Graziano (right) kayos Harold Green in three rounds

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: No selection



JULY 1945

It Also Happened

Henry Armstrong, 32, fights for the last time, losing a 10-round decision to Chester Slider … Due to the ongoing war, there are only two world title fights, with 21-year-old lightweight Ike Williams dethroning NBA champ Juan Zurita (KO 2) and feather king Willie Pep outpointing Phil Terranova (W 15) … Jake LaMotta and Sugar Ray Robinson engage in their fourth and fifth rumbles, with the latter winning both on points … In a non-title bout, former champ Sammy Angott halts NBA lightweight king Williams in six rounds.

AUGUST 1946

1946

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Tony Zale KO 6 Rocky Graziano. Middleweight champion Zale drops Graziano early in the first with a hook to the jaw. Graziano gets up, then unloads a barrage that has Zale down and seemingly out. The champion is saved by the bell. Graziano continues his attack, but Zale pounds the body, and in the sixth, a left to the stomach floors Rocky for the full count.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Tony Zale. Having been in the Navy for nearly four years, middleweight king Zale, who hasn't fought since 1942, scores six straight knockouts in five months (all non-title bouts), then defends against Rocky Graziano. A 3-1 underdog, he gets off the deck in the first, and after absorbing a terrific beating, comes back to kayo the challenger. Zale finishes the year at 58-16-2 (35).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Rocky Graziano KO 2 Marty Servo. Welterweight champion Servo, who has lost just twice in 50 fights (both times to Sugar Ray Robinson), opens as the favorite, but rumors of a fix hike the odds to 10-1. Insisting on going through with the fight, Graziano gives Servo the beating of his life, breaking his nose so badly that the loser retires later in the year.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano (6). Through five, Zale has absorbed a vicious beating. Still, despite having suffered a broken left thumb, he's been digging hooks into Graziano's body. In the sixth, Zale catches Graziano coming in with a terrific left to the pit of the stomach. His legs temporarily numbed, Rocky wants to continue, but fails to beat the count.

A kayo loser, Rocky Graziano still wanted a piece of Tony Zale

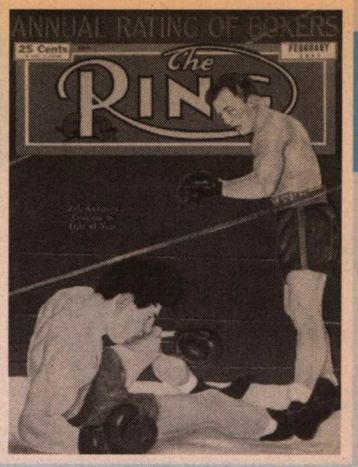
It Also Happened

In one of the most savage battles ever, middleweight titlist Tony Zale keeps the belt, coming from behind to stop 11-5 favorite Rocky Graziano with a bodypunch in round six … After welter king Marty Servo retires, Sugar Ray Robinson rises from the canvas to win the vacant title, scoring a 15-round decision over Tommy Bell … One of the most anticipated rematches in history turns out to be a bust when heavyweight champ Joe Louis halts Billy Conn in the eighth round … Willie Pep unifies the feather title, stopping NBA champ Sal Bartolo in the 12th … New Jersey's Tippy Larkin becomes the first world junior welter champ in 11 years, outpointing Willie Joyce over 12 rounds … European sensation Marcel Cerdan fights for the first time in the USA, decisioning middleweight Georgie Abrams (W 10).

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Gus Lesnevich
Middleweight: Tony Zale
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Junior Welterweight: Tippy Larkin
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

1947



FEBRUARY 1947

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Rocky Graziano KO 6 Tony Zale. In their rematch, Zale starts quickly, and by the third round, Graziano is cut over both eyes and has been down. In the fourth, the challenger rallies, shaking Zale with a right to the chin. He scores repeatedly with his right in the fifth, then opens up in the sixth. With Zale hanging helplessly on the ropes, Graziano wins the middleweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Gus Lesnevich. Light heavyweight champion since 1941, Lesnevich fights only six times after being crowned, losing four of the bouts. In 1947, however, he wins all four of his starts, twice getting off the canvas to kayo Billy Fox in 10, then stopping former champion Melio Bettina in one and twice defeating Tami Mauriello. He advances to 58-11-5 (21).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Harold Dade W 15 Manuel Ortiz. Making his 16th defense of the bantamweight title, Ortiz has made 91 career starts to Dade's 22. The Californian is the heavy favorite, but Dade outhustles him, scoring well enough with his jab and right hand to take a close but unanimous decision and the bantamweight title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Jersey Joe Walcott (4). Making his 24th defense, heavyweight champ Louis is down in the first. In the fourth, Walcott floors him again with a right to the jaw. Louis fails to rise until the count of seven, then clinches and barely survives the round. Still, he goes on to retain the crown via widely disputed split decision.

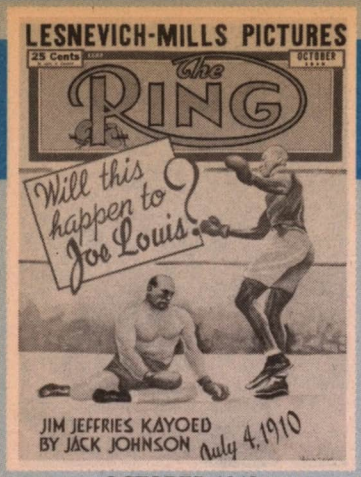
Rocky Graziano connects vs. familiar foe Tony Zale

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Ezzard Charles
Middleweight: Rocky Graziano
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

It Also Happened

In a lightweight unification bout, Ike Williams demolishes Bob Montgomery in six … An aging Joe Louis retains the heavyweight title via 15-round decision over Jersey Joe Walcott; even Louis seems to think the decision is unfair … In a vicious slugfest, Rocky Graziano wins the middleweight title by sixth-round kayo of Tony Zale … Ireland's Rinty Monaghan becomes the first flyweight champ since before the war when he wins the vacant NBA title with a 15-round decision over Dado Marino … The relatively inexperienced Harold Dade captures the bantam crown, outpointing Manuel Ortiz over 15 rounds; two months later, Ortiz regains the title … In order to secure a title shot, middleweight Jake LaMotta throws his fight vs. Billy Fox … Welter title challenger Jimmy Doyle dies of head injuries after being stopped by Sugar Ray Robinson in nine … Rocky Marciano turns pro … Former lightweight champ Benny Leonard, 51, dies while refereeing a bout in New York City.



OCTOBER 1948

1948

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Marcel Cerdan KO 12 Tony Zale. Already an idol in France, Cerdan challenges Zale, again middleweight champion after having kayoed Rocky Graziano in their rubber match in June. Zale starts well, hurting the challenger in the fourth, but Cerdan staggers his rival in the eighth, then wears him down until he collapses at the end of the 11th round. With Zale unable to continue, Cerdan becomes the new champion.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Ike Williams. Lightweight champ Williams goes 10-0 for the year, including three defenses; he decisions Enrique Bolanos in 15, stops former champion Beau Jack in six, and kayos Jesse Flores in 10. Williams also defeats future welterweight titlist Kid Gavilan in improving to 94-10-4 (48).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

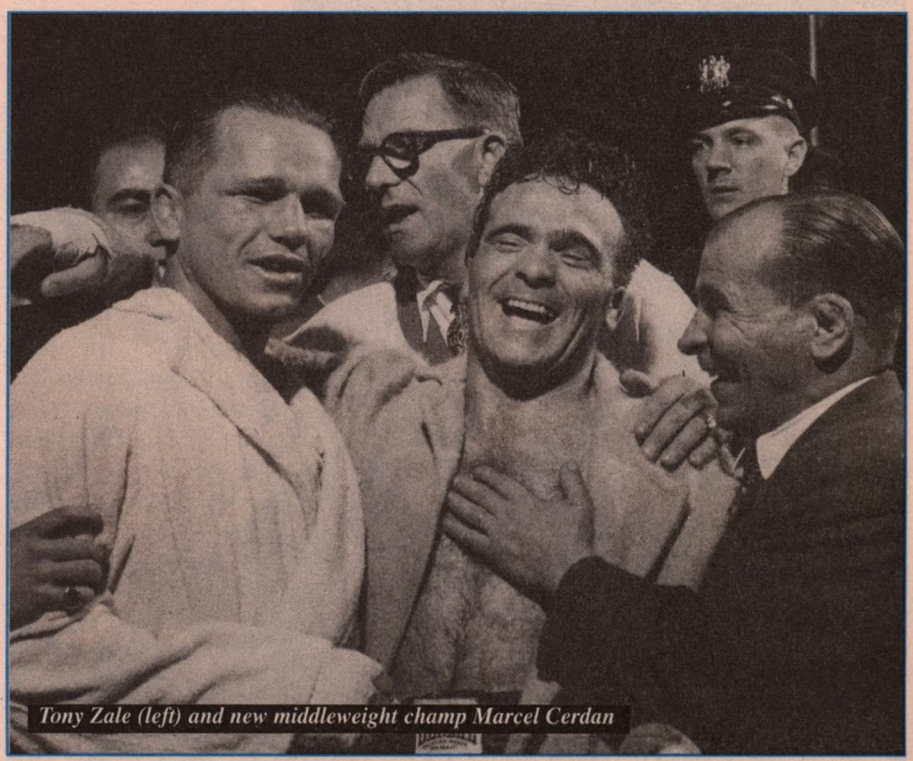
Sandy Saddler KO 4 Willie Pep. Featherweight champion since 1942, Pep has lost just once in 136 fights (in an over-the-weight match vs. Sammy Angott in 1943). However, Saddler dominates from the opening bell, flooring Pep twice in the third, then finishing him in the fourth to win the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Louis-Jersey Joe Walcott (11). As in their first fight, heavyweight champion Louis is behind after 10 rounds and has been down. In the 11th, Walcott makes the mistake of standing flatfooted and trading. The aging "Brown Bomber" hurts the challenger with three rights to the jaw, then drops him for the count to retain the title for the 25th and last time.

It Also Happened

Tony Zale regains the middleweight title, winning his rubber match with Rocky Graziano by third-round kayo; three months later, the charismatic Marcel Cerdan dethrones the suddenly aged Zale by 12th-round stoppage. It is the last bout of Zale's career … Heavyweight champ Joe Louis fights only once, stopping Jersey Joe Walcott in 11 … In a shocker, 22-year-old featherweight Sandy Saddler takes the world title from Willie Pep by fourth-round stoppage … England's Freddie Mills wins the light heavy crown, outpointing former conqueror Gus Lesnevich over 15 rounds … In non-title bouts, welter boss Sugar Ray Robinson decisions Kid Gavilan, and light heavy Ezzard Charles kayos Archie Moore … Billy Conn retires at age 31 … Carmen Basilio turns pro.

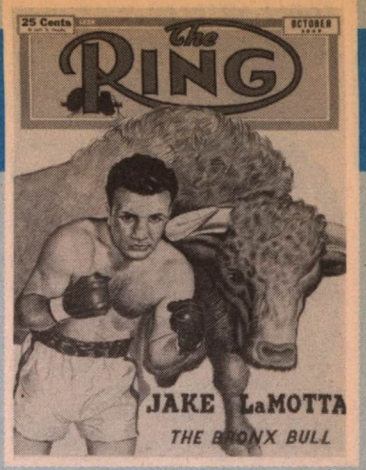


Tony Zale (left) and new middleweight champ Marcel Cerdan

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Ezzard Charles
Middleweight: Marcel Cerdan
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

1949



OCTOBER 1949

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Willie Pep W 15 Sandy Saddler. Knocked out by Saddler the previous October, Pep gives the most inspired performance of his career. Outspeeding Saddler in the early going, he begins to decelerate when the champion works him over at close range. After a rough 10th round, Pep roars back in the 11th and 12th, then survives a Saddler rally to regain the featherweight title by unanimous decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

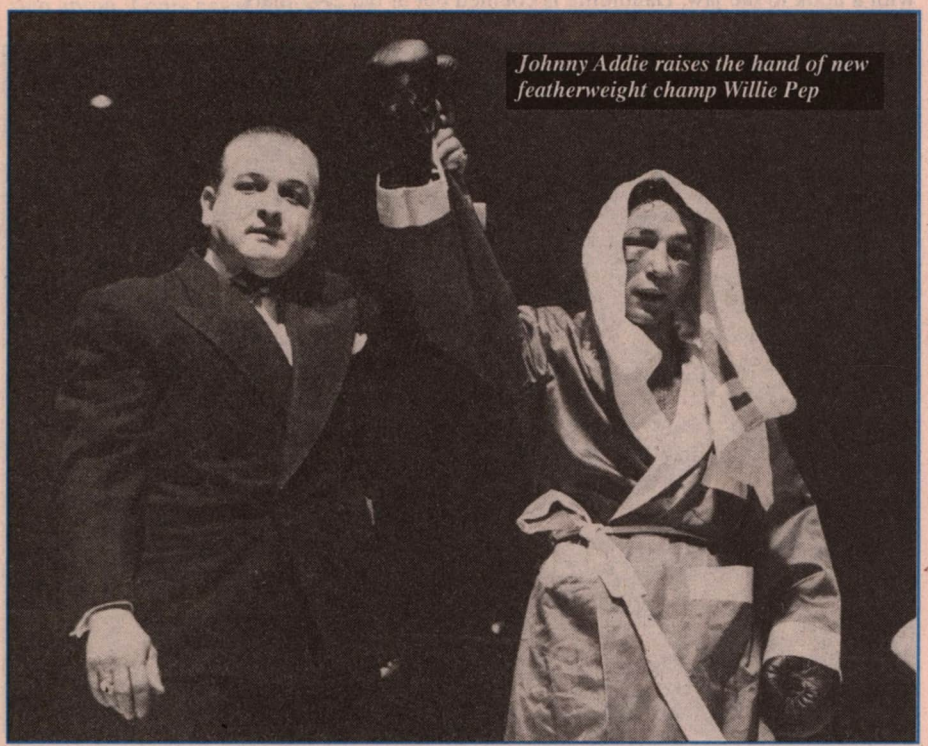
Ezzard Charles. With Joe Louis' retirement in March, Charles takes over the division. After defeating Joey Maxim, he decisions Jersey Joe Walcott to win NBA recognition as heavyweight champion. He follows with defense stoppages of Gus Lesnevich and Pat Valentino to advance to 65-5-1 (42).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Robert Villemain W 10 Jake LaMotta. The date was to have been for LaMotta's rematch with Marcel Cerdan, but after the latter's death in a plane crash in October, Villemain is substituted. Fortunately for middleweight champ LaMotta, the bout is not for the crown, as Villemain repeatedly beats him to the punch en route to a unanimous decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Rocky Graziano-Charley Fusari (10). Fusari floors Graziano in the second and is ahead on points going into the final round. A desperate Graziano rushes out for the 10th, holds Fusari by the throat with his left glove, and pounds him with his right until the fight is stopped.



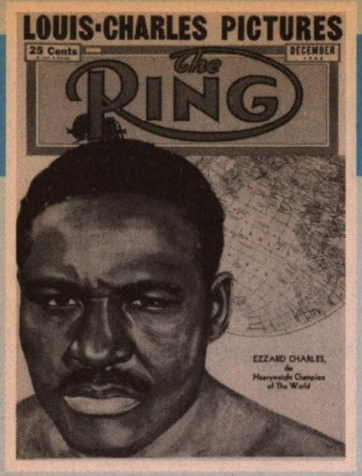
Johnny Addie raises the hand of new featherweight champ Willie Pep

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Ezzard Charles
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Junior Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Joe Louis, 34, retires after making a record 25 defenses … Having lost the middleweight title to Jake LaMotta, Marcel Cerdan, 33, dies in a plane crash while en route to the USA for a rematch … In a lackluster battle for the vacant heavyweight title, Ezzard Charles outpoints Jersey Joe Walcott over 15 rounds … In the finest performance of his career, Willie Pep regains the feather title, decisioning Sandy Saddler over 15 rounds; Saddler becomes the first junior lightweight champ in 16 years, winning the vacant title by outpointing Orlando Zulueta over 10 rounds … In consecutive non-title bouts, Kid Gavilan defeats lightweight king Ike Williams on points.



DECEMBER 1950

1950

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jake LaMotta KO 15 Laurent Dauthuille. LaMotta falls behind early as Dauthuille keeps the middleweight champion on the outside and outboxes him. By the eighth, LaMotta's left eye is partially closed. Dauthuille leads after 14, but in the 15th, a desperate LaMotta finally catches the challenger, flooring him for the full count with just 13 seconds remaining.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

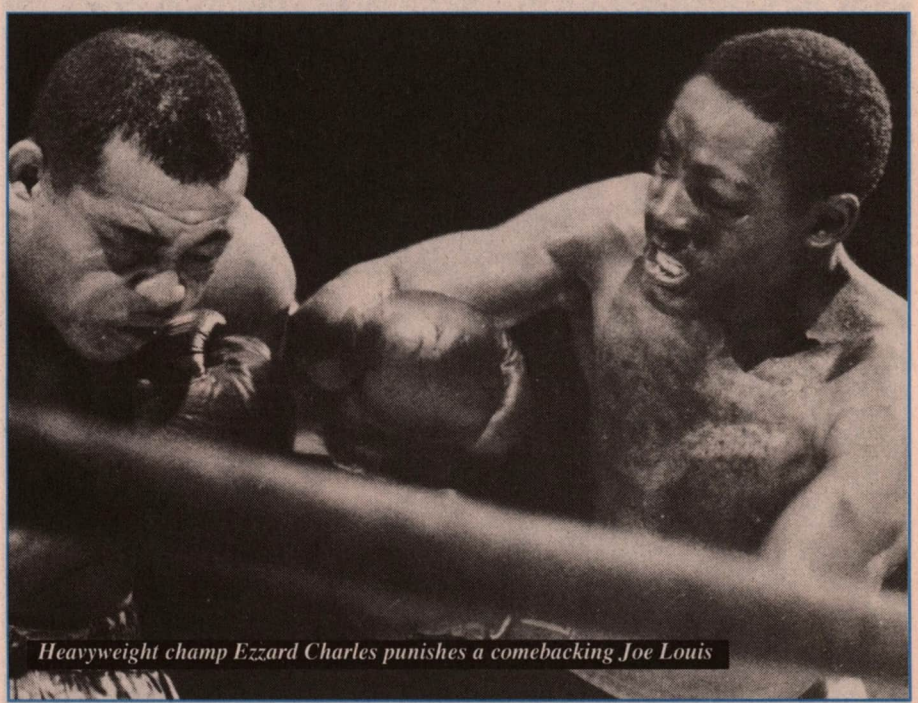
Ezzard Charles. Again dominating the heavyweights, Charles retains the NBA title by stopping Freddie Beshore in 14 rounds, then soundly defeating a comebacking Joe Louis over 15 rounds for the vacant world title. Charles finishes the year by kayoing Nick Barone in 11, advancing to 68-5-1 (44).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Vic Toweel W 15 Manuel Ortiz. Bantamweight champ Ortiz, making the fifth defense of his second reign, and his 21st defense overall, is favored over Toweel, who has had just 11 pro bouts to Ortiz' 114. Despite a broken nose and cut left ear, Toweel dominates through much of the bout, holding off a late rally and winning a decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jake LaMotta-Laurent Dauthuille (15). Weakened from making the middleweight limit, LaMotta is far behind on points. When Dauthuille, thinking LaMotta is hurt, moves in for the finish, "The Raging Bull" opens up with everything he has left, finally flooring his foe with a hook to the jaw. Dauthuille is counted out at the 2:47 mark.



Heavyweight champ Ezzard Charles punishes a comebacking Joe Louis

It Also Happened

Welter king Sugar Ray Robinson begins his entry into the middleweight division, winning the vacant Pennsylvania world title by decisioning Robert Villemain … In his first comeback bout, Joe Louis fails to lift the heavyweight title from Ezzard Charles, losing by 15-round decision … Trailing badly on points, middleweight boss Jake LaMotta keeps the title by stopping Laurent Dauthuille in the 15th and final round … Undefeated bantam Vic Toweel becomes South Africa's first world champ when he dethrones the long-reigning Manuel Ortiz by 15-round verdict … Sandy Saddler regains the feather title by eighth-round TKO; Willie Pep surrenders because of a shoulder injury … In a battle of unbeaten heavyweight contenders, Rocky Marciano barely outpoints Roland LaStarza over 10 rounds … Bob Montgomery retires after losing his seventh consecutive fight.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Ezzard Charles
Light Heavyweight: Joey Maxim
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Junior Lightweight: Sandy Saddler
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Vic Toweel
Flyweight: Dado Marino

1951

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles. Walcott, 37, and making his fifth try at the heavyweight title, has lost his previous two fights, including a decision to Charles in March. A 7-1 underdog, he takes command in the fourth, but neither fighter is hurt until, in the seventh, Walcott suddenly nails Charles with a hook to the jaw. Charles falls on his face and is counted out.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

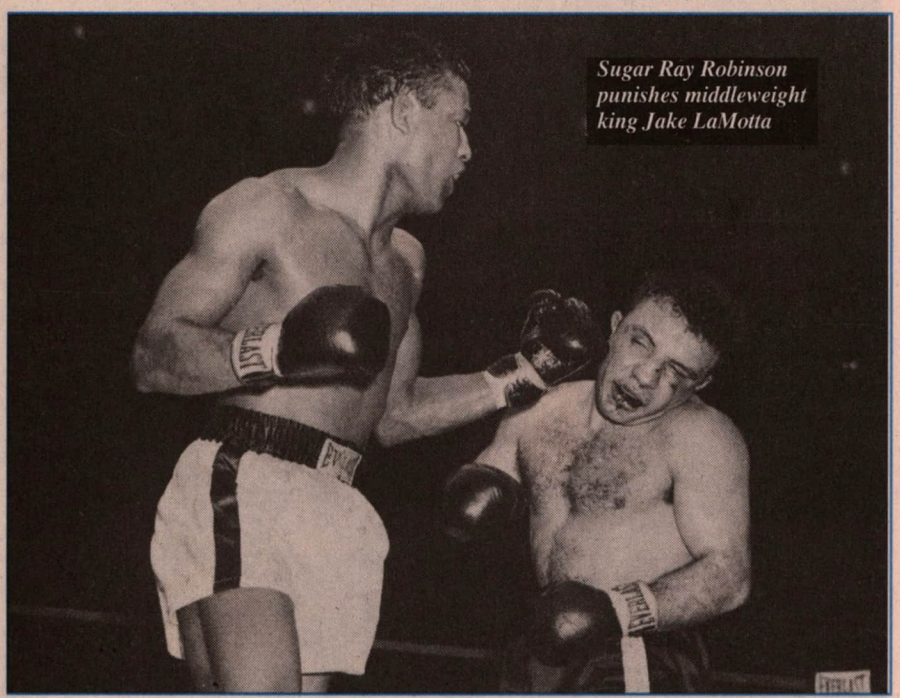
Sugar Ray Robinson. Sugar Ray goes 9-1 (7) with 1 no-contest. In February, he stops longtime rival Jake LaMotta in 13 rounds to win the middleweight title. Then, after losing the belt to Randy Turpin in London, he regains it in New York by stopping the Englishman in the 10th round. Robinson finishes the year at 129-2-2 (85) with 1 no-contest.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Randy Turpin W 15 Ray Robinson. The British and European middleweight champion, Turpin is a 5-1 underdog at Earls Court in London. Despite never having fought more than eight rounds, Turpin uses his jab, strength, and awkwardness to win the crown. The defeat is Robinson's first in a title fight, and just his second in a 132-bout career.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

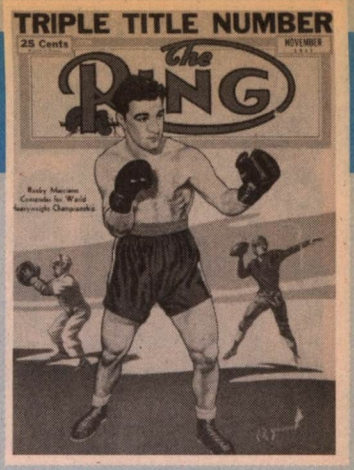
Rocky Marciano-Joe Louis (8). Louis, 37, fights gamely, but Marciano floors him with a right to the chin in the eighth. Louis gets up and gamely tries to fight back. Marciano finishes him with two hooks and a right to the chin that sends Louis down and onto the ring apron. Louis never fights again.



Sugar Ray Robinson punishes middleweight king Jake LaMotta

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweights: Jersey Joe Walcott
Light Heavyweights: Joey Maxim
Middleweights: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweights: Kid Gavilan
Lightweights: Jimmy Carter
Junior Lightweights: Sandy Saddler
Featherweights: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweights: Vic Toweel
Flyweights: Dado Marino



NOVEMBER 1951

It Also Happened

Trying for the heavyweight crown for the fifth time, Jersey Joe Walcott finally gets it right, knocking out 6-1 favorite Ezzard Charles in seven … In "The St. Valentine's Day Massacre," Sugar Ray Robinson stops defending middleweight king Jake LaMotta in 13; in his first defense, Robinson is dethroned via 15-round decision by England's Randy Turpin, but two months later, the Sugar Man wins the rematch, also on points … Rocky Marciano ends the career of Joe Louis, halting the 37-year-old former champ in eight rounds … In a foul-filled fight, Sandy Saddler and Willie Pep battle for the fourth and final time, with the former retaining the feather title by 10th-round stoppage … Kid Gavilan wins the vacant world welter crown, decisioning Johnny Bratton over 15 rounds … Gene Fullmer turns pro.

MARCH 1952

1952

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott. Heavyweight champion Walcott, a 9-5 underdog, floors Marciano in the first with a hook to the jaw. Marciano fights well through five, but in the sixth, a clash of heads leaves a cut on his scalp. Walcott, regaining control, has Marciano hurt in the 12th, but in the 13th, Marciano catches Jersey Joe with a tremendous right to the jaw that finishes him.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

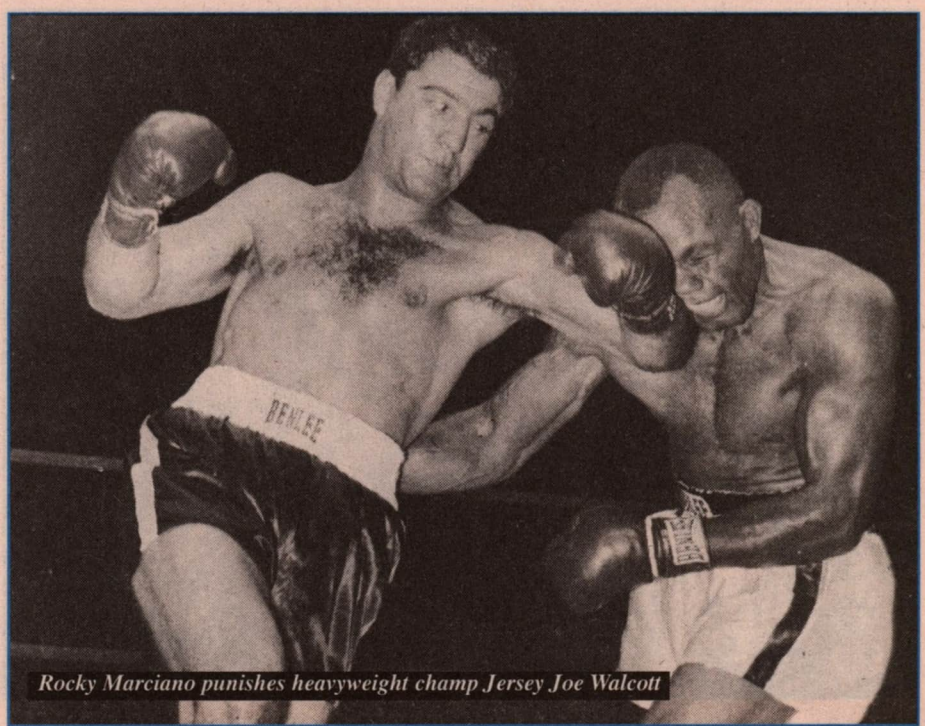
Rocky Marciano. Marciano wins all five of his fights by knockout, advancing to 43-0 (38), with Lee Savold, Gino Buonvino, Bernie Reynolds, and Harry (Kid) Matthews offering little competition. Marciano's challenge of heavyweight champion Jersey Joe Walcott, however, is the stuff of legends. Down in the first and losing on points, The Rock kayos Walcott with one punch.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lauro Salas W 15 Jimmy Carter. Salas, a loser in five bouts in 1951, has already lost to Carter in a lightweight title fight six weeks earlier. Carter is heavily favored, but Salas, with nothing to lose, brawls recklessly. The challenger takes everything Carter can dish out, then backs him up with his own two-fisted attack. The underdog wins a split decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Rocky Marciano-Jersey Joe Walcott (13). After 12 rounds, Walcott is far ahead on points and looks to have more in reserve than the battered Marciano. In the 13th, when the champion drops his left while against the ropes, Marciano unloads a devastating right to the jaw, leaving Walcott helpless and giving the undefeated heavyweight the world title.



Rocky Marciano punishes heavyweight champ Jersey Joe Walcott

It Also Happened

Trailing on points, Rocky Marciano wins the heavyweight title, kayoing Jersey Joe Walcott with a single right hand in round 13 … Sugar Ray Robinson attempts to become a triple-crown champ, but he's denied when he collapses from heat exhaustion after 13 rounds of his challenge of light heavy king Joey Maxim; Robinson is far ahead after 12 rounds. Six months later, Robinson, 31, announces his retirement to pursue a career as a dancer … Only six weeks after losing to the champ, Lauro Salas wins the lightweight title, outpointing Jimmy Carter over 15 rounds; five months later, Carter regains the title … The top-rated light heavy contender for 10 years, Archie Moore finally gets his chance, winning the crown by 15-round verdict over Maxim … Australia's Jimmy Carruthers needs less than a round to win the bantam title, as he crushes Vic Toweel in 139 seconds … Olympic gold medalist Floyd Patterson turns pro, as does Dick Tiger … Rocky Graziano retires at age 30.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Rocky Marciano
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweight: Kid Gavilan
Lightweight: Jimmy Carter
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Jimmy Carruthers
Flyweight: Yoshio Shirai

1953

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Rocky Marciano KO 11 Roland LaStarza. In a rematch of Marciano's 10-round split decision victory in 1950, LaStarza boxes well for six rounds. But The Rock hurts him in the seventh and keeps pressing. In the 11th, the heavyweight champ puts LaStarza through the ropes, and moments later, the bout is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

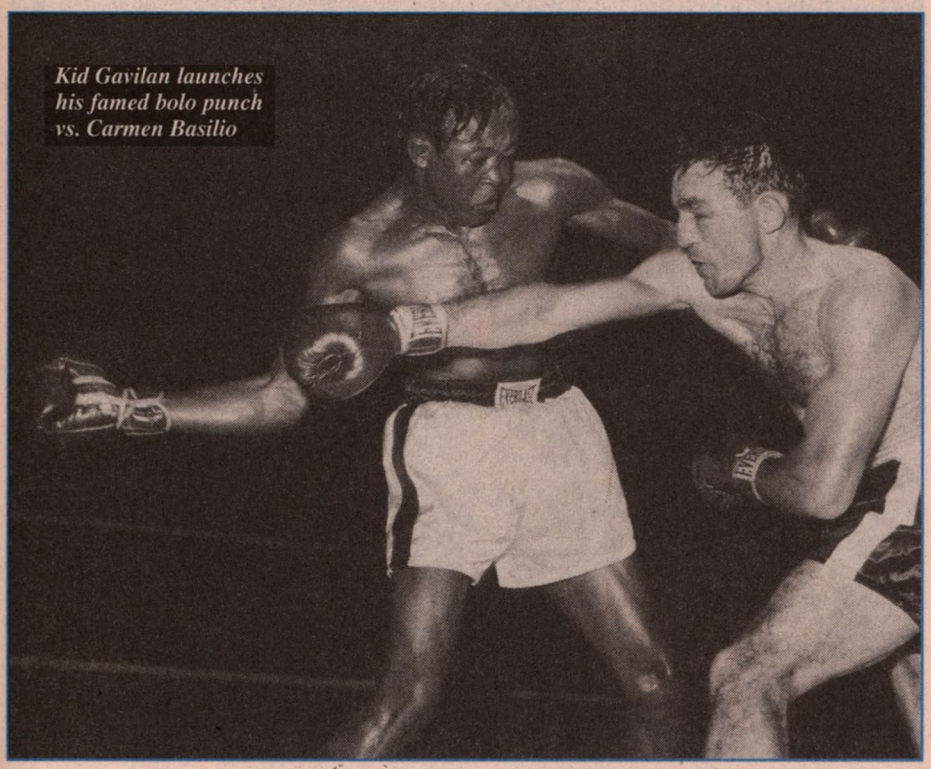
Bobo Olson. With Sugar Ray Robinson retired and the middleweight title vacant, Olson dominates the division, defeating Norman Hayes and Garth Panter, then winning the American title by beating Paddy Young in June. In October, he upsets former champ Randy Turpin for the vacant world title, finishing the year at 54-6 (26).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Bobo Olson W 15 Randy Turpin. Turpin, an 8-5 favorite, opens well in the first, shaking Olson with a right to the jaw. Bulling Turpin to the ropes, Olson pounds his opponent on the inside, digging to the body and flooring him in the ninth and 10th rounds. Turpin survives to hear the final bell, but Olson wins a unanimous decision and the vacant middleweight title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

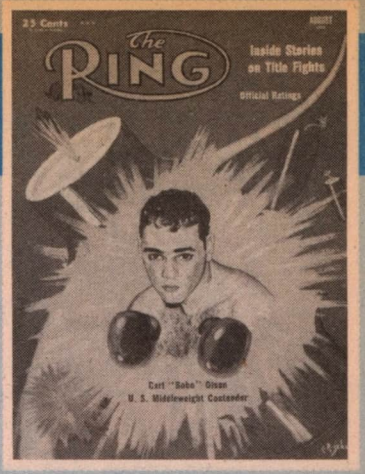
Kid Gavilan-Carmen Basilio (2). Gavilan, who is at his peak, is shocked when Basilio unloads a hook to the jaw that floors him for one of the few times in his career. Though shaken, Gavilan survives the round and goes on to retain the welterweight title by split decision.



Kid Gavilan launches his famed bolo punch vs. Carmen Basilio

THE BEST FIGHTERS

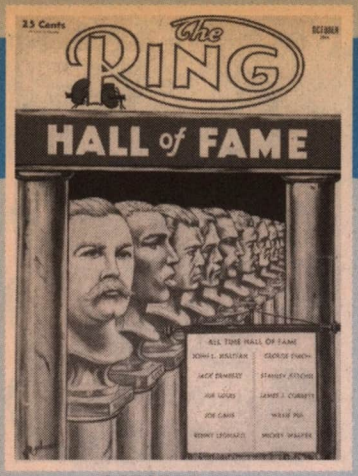
Heavyweight: Rocky Marciano
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Bobo Olson
Welterweight: Kid Gavilan
Lightweight: Jimmy Carter
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Jimmy Carruthers
Flyweight: Yoshio Shirai



AUGUST 1953

It Also Happened

Lightweight champ Jimmy Carter loses three times, but wins all his title fights; in one defense, he knocks down Tommy Collins 10 times in two rounds … Heavyweight king Rocky Marciano hammers Jersey Joe Walcott (KO 1) and Roland LaStarza (KO 11) … Bobo Olson wins the middleweight title vacated by Sugar Ray Robinson, outpointing Randy Turpin over 15 rounds … Welter champ Kid Gavilan stops unbeaten TV favorite Chuck Davey (37-0-2) in 10, squeezes by Carmen Basilio via 15-round verdict, and easily outpoints Johnny Bratton over the same distance … Bantam champ Jimmy Carruthers defends twice, stopping former titlist Vic Toweel (KO 10) and decisioning Pappy Gault (W 15) … Sonny Liston turns pro.



OCTOBER 1954

1954

It Also Happened

Hot-and-cold lightweight Paddy DeMarco wins the world crown, outpointing Jimmy Carter over 15 rounds; eight months later, Carter regains the title by 15th-round kayo … Bantam champ Jimmy Carruthers, 24, announces his retirement; Algerian-born Robert Cohen fills the slot by decisioning Chamrern Songkitrat (W 15) … Pascual Perez becomes Argentina's first world champ, dethroning fly titlist Yoshio Shirai by 15-round verdict … Welter champ Kid Gavilan challenges middleweight boss Bobo Olson, losing a 15-round decision. Then he loses the 147-pound crown to Johnny Saxton by 15-round verdict … Heavyweight champ Rocky Marciano twice survives Ezzard Charles (W 15, KO 8) … Jake LaMotta, 31, fights for the last time, dropping a 10-round decision to Billy Kilgore.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Rocky Marciano KO 8 Ezzard Charles. In their title fight rematch, Marciano starts off well, flooring Charles in the second. Near the end of the sixth, however, either an accidental elbow or a left hook splits Marciano's nose. In danger of having the bout stopped, The Rock comes back in the eighth to twice floor Charles, the second time for the count.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

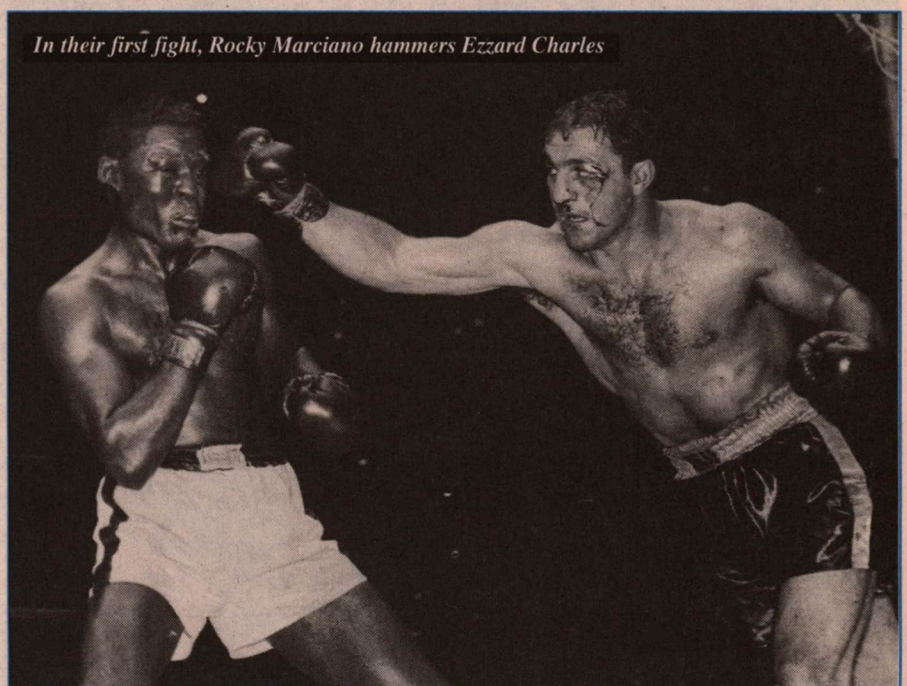
Rocky Marciano. The heavyweight champ defends twice, both times against former titlist Ezzard Charles. In their first battle, Marciano, hampered by a cut over his left eye, battles 15 tough rounds in winning a close decision. In the rematch, the champ overcomes a badly cut nose to finish Charles in eight. He improves to 47-0 (41).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Paddy DeMarco W 15 Jimmy Carter. A 4-1 underdog, DeMarco surprises the experts and lightweight champ Carter. Despite a reputation for butting when in close, the challenger outboxes Carter from the outside. He's staggered in the fifth, but rebounds to pound away at his opponent's midsection. Carter rallies over the last four rounds. Still, the decision and title go to DeMarco.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Archie Moore-Harold Johnson (14). Moore, a 2-1 favorite, is floored in the 10th round and behind on two of the cards going into the 14th. He rallies to hurt Johnson with a right to the jaw, then floors him moments later. Johnson beats the count, but Moore unleashes a barrage that brings a stoppage seconds later. "The Ol' Mongoose" retains the light heavyweight title.



In their first fight, Rocky Marciano hammers Ezzard Charles

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Rocky Marciano
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Bobo Olson
Welterweight: Kid Gavilan
Lightweight: Jimmy Carter
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Robert Cohen
Flyweight: Pascual Perez

1955

OCTOBER 1955

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Carmen Basilio KO 12 Tony DeMarco. DeMarco, who loses the welterweight title to Basilio in June, unloads his heavy artillery early in the rematch, staggering Basilio in the seventh and battering him in the eighth. Basilio then comes on to hurt the champion, dropping him twice in the 12th before the fight is halted at the 1:54 mark (two seconds later than in their first bout).

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

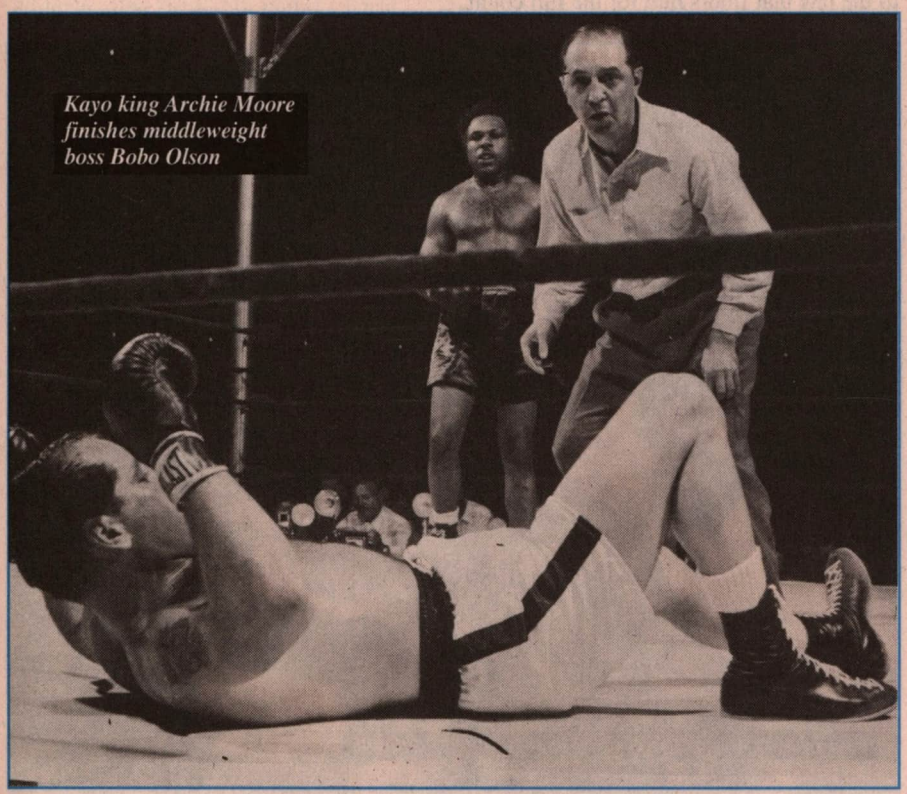
Rocky Marciano. Marciano twice defends the heavyweight title; in May, he stops British challenger Don Cockell (KO 9), then finishes his career at Yankee Stadium in September, getting off the canvas in the second round to knock out light heavyweight champ Archie Moore (KO 9). The Rock retires at 49-0 (43).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Ralph (Tiger) Jones W 10 Sugar Ray Robinson. A loser in his last five bouts, Jones is an 8-1 underdog vs. the comebacking Robinson. Few give him a chance, but he slips Robinson's jabs, stays under his right hand, cuts him over the right eye, and pounds him against the ropes in the last three rounds en route to a unanimous decision win.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Archie Moore-Bobo Olson (3). Light heavyweight champ Moore, tuning up for Rocky Marciano, loses the first two rounds. In the third, a hook floors Olson, who tries to get up, but is counted out by referee Ruby Goldstein.



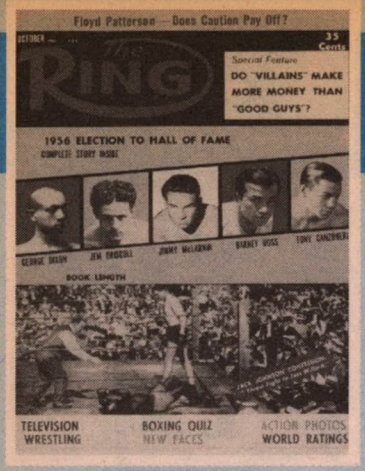
Kayo king Archie Moore finishes middleweight boss Bobo Olson

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Rocky Marciano
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweight: Carmen Basilio
Lightweight: Bud Smith
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Raul Macias
Flyweight: Pascual Perez

It Also Happened

A comebacking Sugar Ray Robinson regains the middleweight title, stopping Bobo Olson in two … Heavyweight boss Rocky Marciano halts England's Don Cockell (KO 9) and light heavy champ Archie Moore (KO 9); in turn, Moore rejects the challenge of middleweight titlist Bobo Olson (KO 3) … Bud Smith, who enters the ring at 29-12-6, takes Jimmy Carter's lightweight title by 15-round verdict … Feather boss Sandy Saddler defends for the first time in four years, outpointing "Red Top" Davis over 15 rounds … After Tony DeMarco takes the welter title from Johnny Saxton (KO 14), Carmen Basilio wins the crown, halting DeMarco in 12 brutal rounds … Carlos Ortiz turns pro … Manuel Ortiz, 39, retires.



OCTOBER 1956

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Rocky Marciano, 32, retires. At 49-0, he is the only champion in history to go undefeated over the course of his entire career; Floyd Patterson wins the title vacated by The Rock, stopping light heavy king Archie Moore in five rounds. At 21, the New Yorker becomes the youngest heavyweight champ ever … Carmen Basilio loses the welter crown to Johnny Saxton by 15-round decision, then regains it by ninth-round kayo … Italian deaf mute Mario D'Agata wins the bantam crown, stopping Robert Cohen in seven … New Orleans veteran Joe Brown unseats lightweight king Bud Smith by 15-round decision … Heavyweight prospect Sonny Liston is convicted in St. Louis of assault with a deadly weapon and beating up a policeman, then taking the officer's gun.

1956

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Carmen Basilio KO 9 Johnny Saxton. In March, Basilio loses the welter title to Saxton on a disputed decision. The rematch sees Basilio attacking from the opening bell, and Saxton surprisingly trading with him. Basilio's hooks to the body and head weaken Saxton and rip open a huge gash in his mouth. In the ninth, Saxton is nearly down when the fight is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

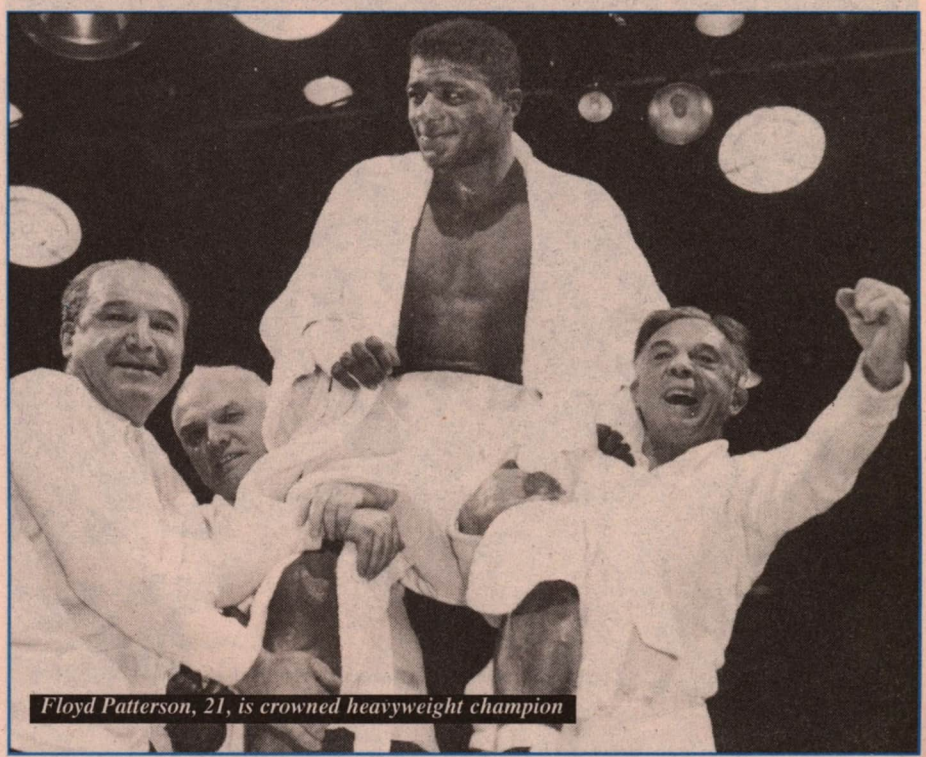
Floyd Patterson. With the retirement of Rocky Marciano in April, Patterson moves to the forefront of the heavyweight division. After knocking out Jimmy Walls and Alvin Williams, he takes a 12-round decision from Tommy (Hurricane) Jackson. In November, Patterson, 21, kayos Archie Moore in five for the vacant world title, becoming the youngest heavyweight champion ever. He advances to 31-1 (22).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Johnny Saxton W 15 Carmen Basilio. Basilio, a 2-1 favorite to retain the welter title, hurts Saxton in the second and third, but the challenger's left glove splits. After it's replaced, Saxton jabs and runs. After 15 rounds, most ringside reporters have Basilio ahead, but the decision and title go to Saxton.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Robinson-Bobo Olson (4). Robinson, who had regained the middleweight title from Olson with a two-round knockout the previous December, takes a beating for the first three rounds. In the fourth, he sets up Olson, then catches him with a terrific hook to the jaw that floors him for the full count.



Floyd Patterson, 21, is crowned heavyweight champion

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweight: Carmen Basilio
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Mario D'Agata
Flyweight: Pascual Perez

1957

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Carmen Basilio W 15 Sugar Ray Robinson. Welterweight champ Basilio issues middleweight boss Robinson a beating in the trenches, despite giving away 7½ pounds. Boxing with a badly cut left eye, the challenger is relentless, repeatedly unleashing his hook to the body and head. Nearly stopping Robinson in the 11th, he wins the title by split decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

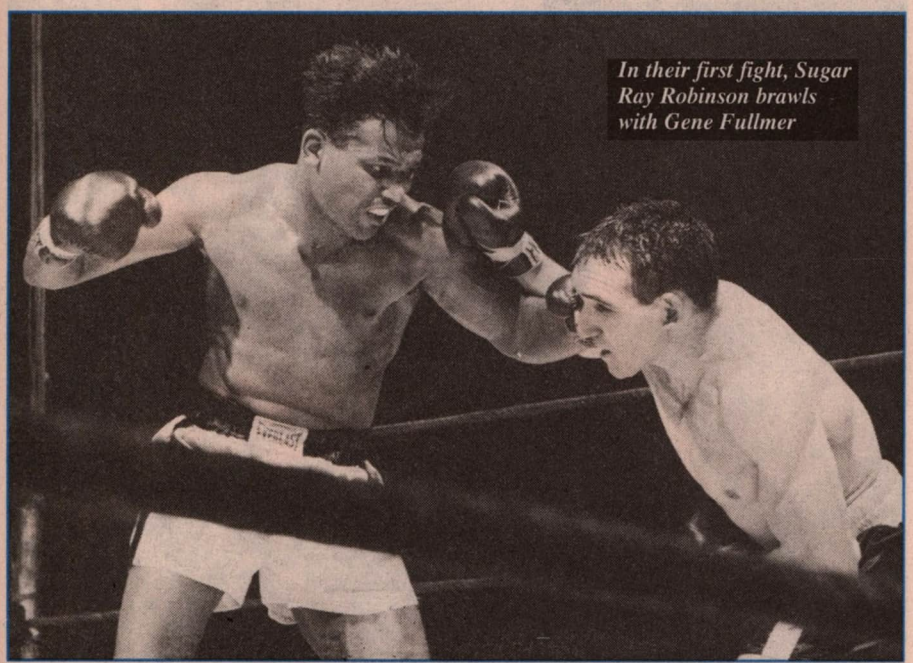
Carmen Basilio. In February, Basilio defends the welter title by knocking out Johnny Saxton in two rounds. After a four-round kayo of Harold Jones, he challenges middleweight champ Sugar Ray Robinson in September. In one of the greatest fights in the history of the division, Basilio takes the title by split decision, improving to 54-12-7 (25).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Gene Fullmer W 15 Sugar Ray Robinson. Fullmer, angered when his fight with middleweight champion Robinson is postponed, gives Robinson his New Year's present a day late. He pounds Sugar Ray against the ropes and knocks him out of the ring in the seventh. Cut over his right eye, Robinson fades in the championship rounds as Fullmer wins a unanimous decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Robinson-Gene Fullmer (5). After winning the first three rounds, middleweight champion Fullmer takes everything Robinson can unleash in the fourth and resumes his attack. Suddenly, in the fifth, Robinson catches him with what goes down in ring lore as "The Perfect Punch," a hook to the chin that drops the steel-jawed Fullmer for the count.



In their first fight, Sugar Ray Robinson brawls with Gene Fullmer

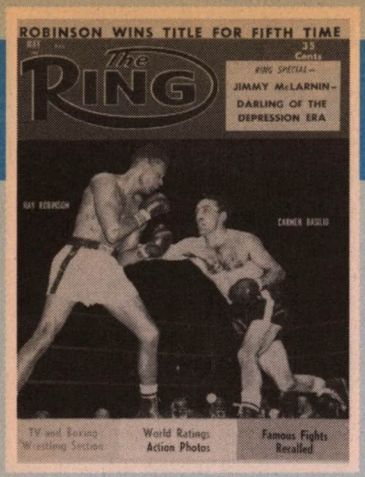
THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweight: Carmen Basilio
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Featherweight: Hogan (Kid) Bassey
Bantamweight: Alphonse Halimi
Flyweight: Pascual Perez

JUNE 1957

It Also Happened

Olympic gold medalist Pete Rademacher makes history by fighting for the heavyweight title in his pro debut. He scores a knockdown, but suffers a sixth-round kayo at the hands of Floyd Patterson … Sugar Ray Robinson loses the middleweight crown on points to Gene Fullmer, then regains it with a one-punch kayo in the fifth round; his decisive left hook is described as "the perfect punch" … Welter boss Carmen Basilio moves up and takes Robinson's title by 15-round decision … Algerian-born Alphonse Halimi proves himself the best bantie in the world, dethroning Mario D'Agata (W 15) and outpointing Raul Macias (W 15) … After Sandy Saddler, 30, announces his retirement, Nigeria's Hogan (Kid) Bassey wins the vacant feather title, stopping Cherif Hamia in 10 rounds.



MAY 1958

1958

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Robinson W 15 Carmen Basilio. The rematch is as grueling as the original. Basilio punishes Robinson to the body in the early rounds, but in the fifth, a right hand produces a huge swelling that closes the champion's left eye. Robinson methodically outboxes Basilio in the later rounds, nearly flooring him in the 15th and winning the middleweight title for the fifth time by split decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Ingemar Johansson. "Ingemar Who?" comes out of nowhere—or at least Sweden—to become the top-rated heavyweight contender. In February, Johansson knocks out Joe Erskine (KO 13) in defense of the European title. After halting Heinz Neuhaus (KO 4), he shocks unbeaten Eddie Machen, knocking him out in one round to go to 21-0 (13).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

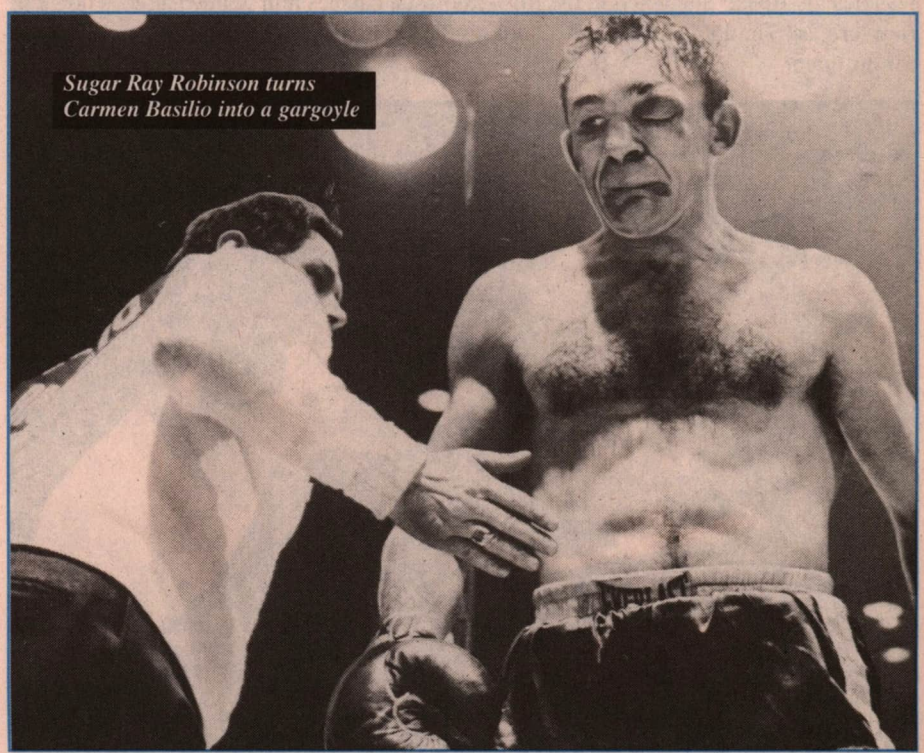
Don Jordan W 15 Virgil Akins. Akins, who won the welter title vacated when Carmen Basilio moved up to middleweight, is a 3-1 favorite. Mindful of Akins' power, Jordan fights him from the outside, frustrating the champion by countering him effectively. Never able to corner or hurt Jordan, Akins loses the title by unanimous decision.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Ingemar Johansson-Eddie Machen (1). Machen, a 2-1 favorite and the second-ranked heavyweight contender, faces the unbeaten but little-known Johansson. A minute into the round, Johansson shocks the American by dropping him with a right to the chin. Machen gets up, but Johansson downs him again moments later, this time for the count.

It Also Happened

In an incredible comeback, 44-year-old light heavy champ Archie Moore keeps the crown, rebounding from four knockdowns to halt Yvon Durelle in 11. Moore also sets the all-time record for kayos with 127 … In a non-title bout, feather champ Hogan Bassey comes from behind to kayo Willie Pep in nine … Sugar Ray Robinson wins the middle title for the fifth time, outpointing Carmen Basilio over 15 rounds … Powerpuncher Virgil Akins scores nine knockdowns in four rounds en route to winning the vacant world welter title by kayo over Vince Martinez. He keeps the crown for half a year before losing by 15-round decision to California's Don Jordan … Jose Napoles and Emile Griffith turn pro … Kid Gavilan retires at age 32.



Sugar Ray Robinson turns Carmen Basilio into a gargoyle

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Robinson
Welterweight: Virgil Akins
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Featherweight: Hogan (Kid) Bassey
Bantamweight: Alphonse Halimi
Flyweight: Pascual Perez

1959

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Gene Fullmer KO 14 Carmen Basilio. In a terrific battle for the vacant NBA middleweight title, Fullmer proves to be the stronger of the two. Bleeding from the mouth and nose, he cuts Basilio under the left eye and counters his rival's attacks with powerful rights to the jaw. In the 14th, with Basilio nearly down, the bout is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Ingemar Johansson. Johansson fights just once, but his victory is more than sufficient to win him top honors for the second straight year. In June, he floors defending heavyweight champ Floyd Patterson seven times in the third round to win the world title, boosting him to 22-0 (14).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Ingemar Johansson KO 3 Floyd Patterson. Though unbeaten and the reigning European heavyweight champion, Johansson is a 7-1 underdog. Having never fought before in the USA, and having revealed little about himself in sparring, he remains a mystery until the third round, when he drops Patterson seven times and wins the title.

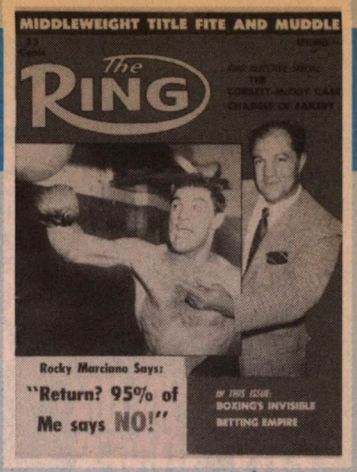
ROUND OF THE YEAR

Ingemar Johansson-Floyd Patterson (3). After two uneventful rounds, Johansson's vaunted right, underused during his training sessions, suddenly manifests itself against Patterson's chin. Ingo floors the champion seven times. After the last knockdown, referee Ruby Goldstein stops the bout, making the Swede the new heavyweight champion.

Ingo Bingo! Ingemar Johansson kayos Floyd Patterson

THE BEST FIGHTERS

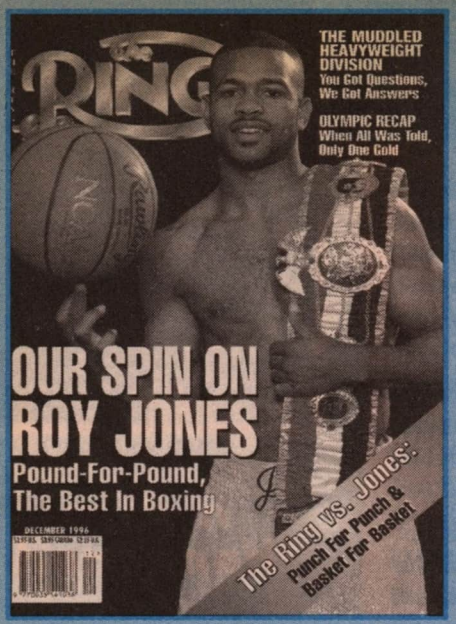
Heavyweight: Ingemar Johansson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Gene Fullmer
Welterweight: Don Jordan
Junior Welterweight: Carlos Ortiz
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Junior Lightweight: Harold Gomes
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Jose Becerra
Flyweight: Pascual Perez



NOVEMBER 1959

It Also Happened

Fly champ Pascual Perez loses for the first time in 51 bouts, dropping a 10-round non-title decision to Sadao Yaoita in Japan … Sweden's Ingemar Johansson shocks the world by scoring seven knockdowns in the third round and winning the heavyweight title from Floyd Patterson … Carlos Ortiz becomes the first junior welter champ in 13 years by stopping Kenny Lane in three rounds; Harold Gomes wins the junior lightweight crown, which had been vacant for nine years, by outpointing Paul Jorgensen (W 15) … Mexico's Jose Becerra wins the bantam crown, stopping Alphonse Halimi in eight … Gene Fullmer wins the vacant NBA middleweight title, stopping Carmen Basilio in the 14th round of a thriller … Davey Moore takes the feather title, halting Hogan Bassey in 11.



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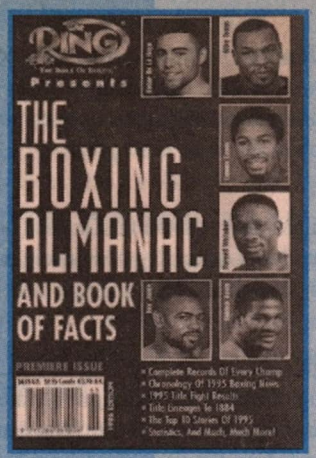

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OFFICIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAM

HONORING BOXING'S BEST OF THE BEST SINCE 1922

Section Compiled By Mike Silver
Nominees selected by the editors of The Ring

THE BEST FIGHTER

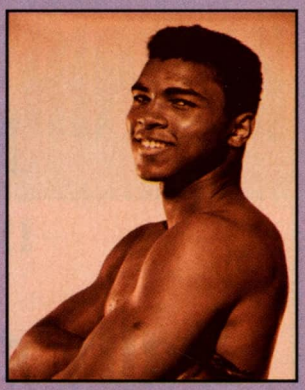
The Nominees: Sugar Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis, and Henry Armstrong

In the 75 years of THE RING, we've chronicled the exploits of every great fighter from A to Z (Ali to Zivic). But what defines greatness in this category? If one were to create a recipe of what is needed to make a great fighter, it would have to include the basic ingredients that go into making any great athlete: stamina, speed, strength, timing, toughness, and an insatiable will to win. For the great fighter, those ingredients are just the starting point. Because in the ring, the better athlete doesn't always come out on top. It is not necessarily the best puncher who will win, or the most scientific, strongest, fastest, or toughest. Invariably, the winner is the best *fighter*. The truly great ones must be capable of reaching down to the very depths of their being and, drawing on some mysterious inner resource, overcome adversity. Moreover, in the process of defeating the most formidable of opposition, they must bring forth a performance that would turn the very gods on Olympus green with envy.

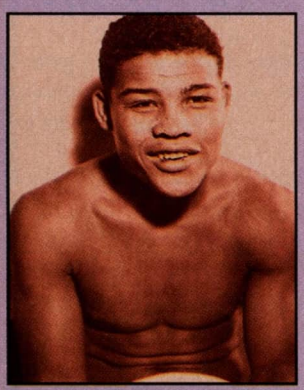
Sugar Ray Robinson

Sugar Ray Robinson (1940-1965): Over the course of his amazing 25-year career, Robinson faced the boxers and punchers, the maulers, cuties, and iron men. He outfought them all with a singular grace and poise that transformed his violent profession into an art form. His balance; so perfect. His coordination; so smooth. His delivery; so deadly. The Sugar Man could do it all. The best artist as fighter ever.

Muhammad Ali (1960-1981): The young Clay/Ali was so difficult to hit that questions regarding his fighting heart and ability to take a punch followed him into his 3½-year exile. Ironically, if not for his enforced layoff and the subsequent erosion of Ali's magnificent athletic prowess, we might never have found out the answers to those questions. But damn the terrible price he had to pay.



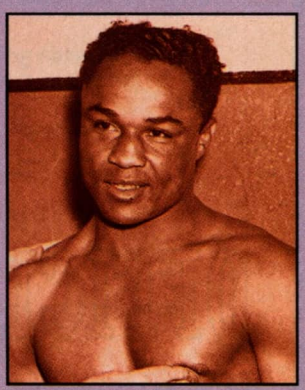
Muhammad Ali



Joe Louis

Joe Louis (1934-1951): The Terminator had nothing on Louis. "The Brown Bomber" was a programmed machine of awesome power, a deadpan killer who did not just defeat an opponent, but executed him. If all Louis possessed was his punch and pulverizing left jab, he would still have achieved greatness. But he was an excellent boxer, too. His combination-punching should be required study for every aspiring boxer.

Henry Armstrong (1931-1945): "Hammerin' Hank" was a bobbing, weaving, perpetual punching machine. He won the featherweight, lightweight, and welterweight championships (no split titles then!) in a 10-month span, fought to a draw with the defending middleweight champion, and risked the 147-pound crown a remarkable 20 times in 29 months. Was it just coincidence that comic book hero "Superman" made his debut the same year that Armstrong won his three titles?



Henry Armstrong

THE BEST FIGHT

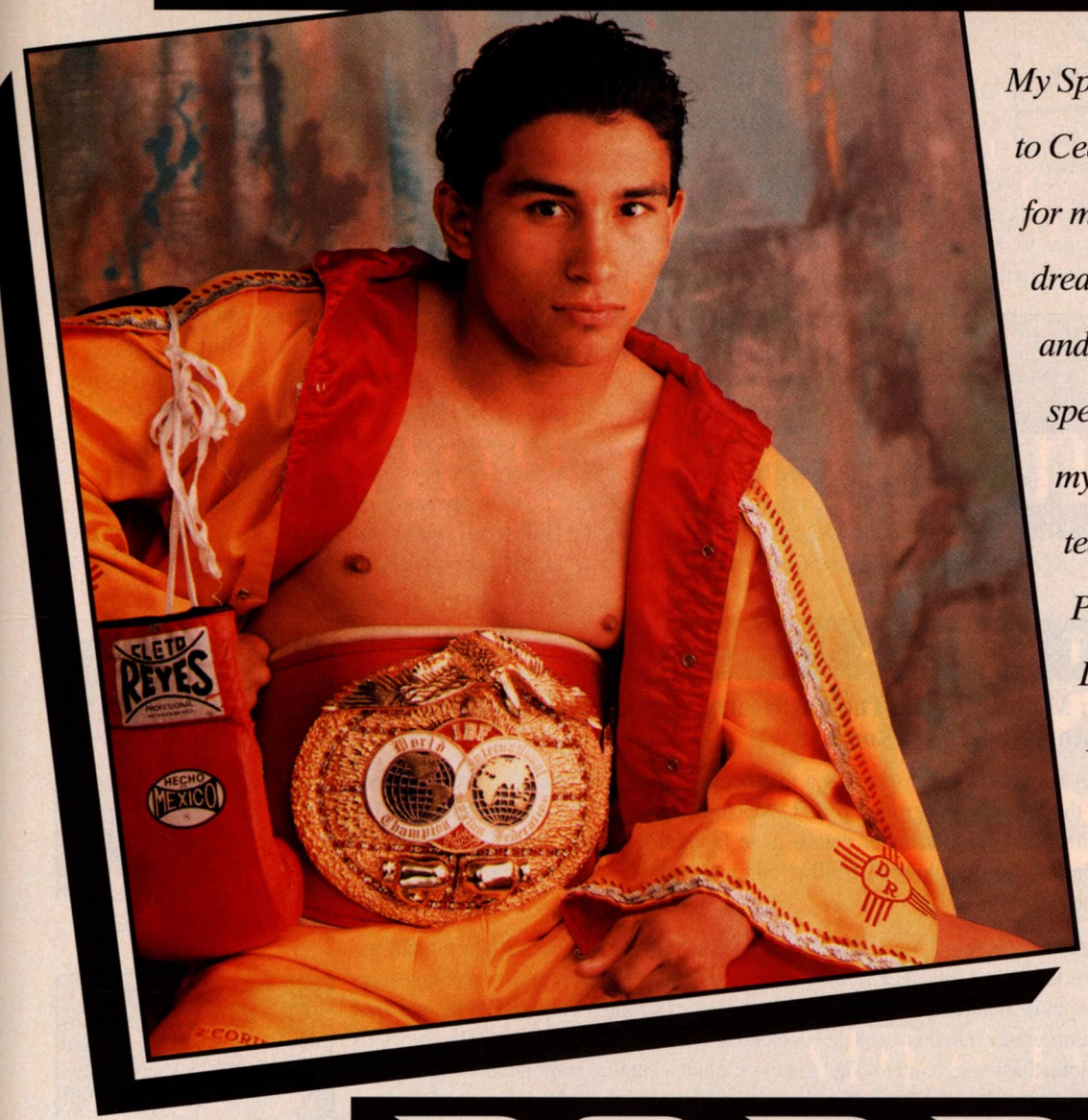
The Nominees: Muhammad Ali KO 14 Joe Frazier, Rocky Graziano KO 6 Tony Zale, Jack Dempsey KO 2 Luis Firpo

The great fights are always about styles. Matching two cautious counterpunchers is a sure cure for insomnia. But pit a fast-stepping boxer against a slam-bang puncher and you've got real possibilities. Even putting together two extremely clever boxers—always a delight for the purists—can be an elevating experience. Let's face it, there is nothing in the realm of sport to equal the heart-pounding electricity of a truly great fight. It is high drama of the first order. The play is written as we watch, each round a new act. You do not dare leave your seat for fear of missing a key moment. And if the personalities of the fighters are as different as their styles, so much the better.

(Continued on page 54)

Two-Time World Champion

First American Flyweight World Champion in 63 Years



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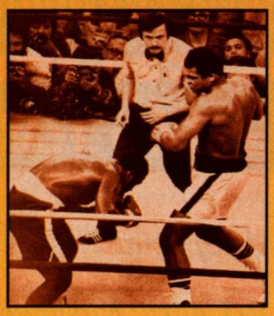
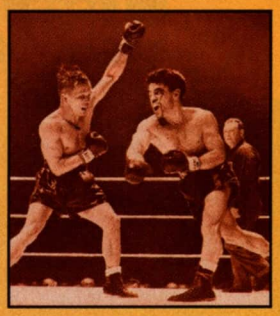


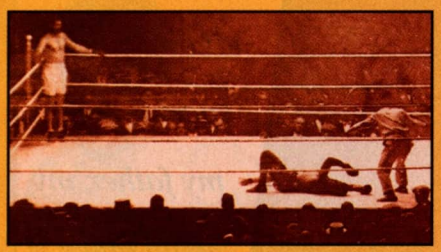
Ali KO 14 Frazier

Ali KO 14 Frazier, October 1, 1975, Quezon City, Philippines: Frazier was a madman in this fight, an unstoppable, left hook-crazy, beast of prey. Even world champion Ali, who after two fights thought he knew the limits of "Smokin' Joe's" ferocity, was surprised. For most of 12 rounds, he took everything Frazier could dish out. And then, suddenly, staging one of the most fantastic comebacks in heavyweight title fight history, "The Greatest" drew on his last reserves of energy and summoned the resolve to float like a butterfly and sting like a bee one more time.



Graziano KO 6 Zale

Graziano KO 6 Zale, July 16, 1947, Chicago: Before the Zale-Graziano series, we could only have imagined what gladiatorial combat must have been like in the ancient Roman Coliseum. When it comes to pure, naked savagery, their three fights had no equal. All that was missing was Caligula in his box giving the thumbs-up sign for the loser, because even he was not crazy enough not to want to see the rematch. In chapter two, Graziano absorbs a beating before staging a passionate comeback and halting defending middleweight champion Zale.

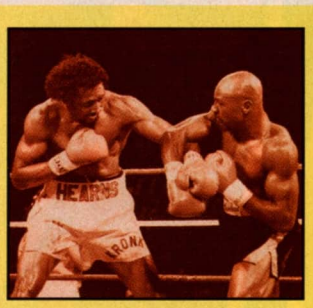


Dempsey KO 2 Firpo

Dempsey KO 2 Firpo, September 14, 1923, New York City: This is the fight your grandfather first told you about. You remember him speaking in reverential tones of the great Dempsey, "The Manassa Mauler," and of his fight with the Argentine giant Luis Angel Firpo, "The Wild Bull Of The Pampas." You listened with rapt attention as he told how Dempsey, knocked completely out of the ring in the first round, was pushed back just in the nick of time. And how, after the wildest four minutes ever seen in a ring, with Dempsey down twice and Firpo nine times, the heavyweight champion flattened The Wild Bull in the second round. Years later, you got hold of the film and understand what all the fuss was about.

THE BEST ROUND

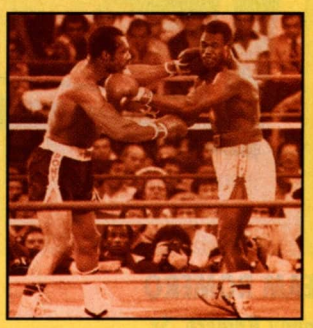
The Nominees: Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns (1), Larry Holmes-Ken Norton (15), George Foreman-Ron Lyle (4)



Hagler-Hearns

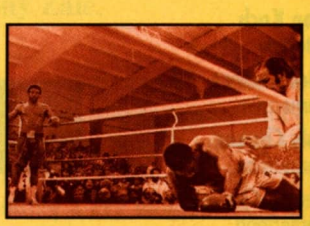
More often than not, a great round is a microcosm of a great fight. One rarely occurs without the other. A great round is that spectacular portion of a memorable fight that stays with you long after other details have faded. The round must pulsate with an intense ebb and flow of furious physical conflict that whips the howling crowd into an orgasmic frenzy. Get the picture?

Hagler-Hearns (Round 1), April 15, 1985, Las Vegas: It was "The Hitman's" decision to go for broke that gave this round its place in history. Hearns could have elected to use his superior reach and fine jab in an attempt to outbox the heavier and stronger Hagler. But he was first and foremost a murderous puncher, and he decided to gamble. Hearns tore into the middleweight champion, throwing bombs. The granite-chinned Hagler responded in kind. The result was nothing short of breathtaking. Punches were thrown without letup for the full three minutes. Both men were staggered, and blood streamed down Hagler's face. Hagler would prevail by third-round kayo, but that incredible first stanza is what everyone remembers.



Holmes-Norton

Holmes-Norton (Round 15), June 9, 1978, Las Vegas: The richest prize in sports was hanging in the balance. The 15th and final round would decide who would be called the best heavyweight in the world. If that wasn't motivation enough to put forth 110 percent, what is? Abandoning any sort of defense, Holmes and defending WBC champion Norton slugged away, trading momentum and drawing on every last bit of energy their exhausted bodies would provide. As it turned out, Holmes took the round, a close decision, and the title.



Foreman-Lyle

Foreman-Lyle (Round 4), January 24, 1976, Las Vegas: The tape of this one should be in the Smithsonian. These two heavy-handed behemoths staged the wildest heavyweight slugfest since Dempsey-Firpo some 50 years earlier. You really had to see it to believe it. First, Foreman went down, then Lyle, then Foreman. Half the audience was screaming, while the other half, too stunned to react, just stared with their mouths open. Even Howard Cosell, doing the commentary, got momentarily tongue-tied. Foreman ultimately prevailed, halting Lyle in the fifth.

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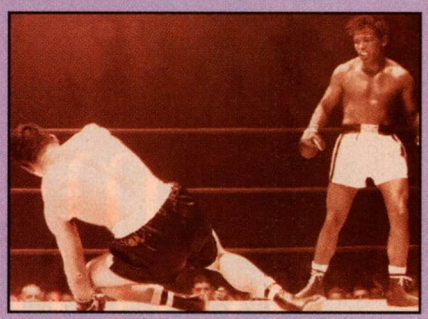
THE BEST KNOCKOUT

The Nominees: Sugar Ray Robinson KO 5 Gene Fullmer, George Foreman KO 10 Michael Moorer, Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott

The single most dramatic moment in boxing is the unexpected one-punch knockout. In its pure form, it is extremely rare. Most often, a knockout is the result of an accumulation of punches. Even the most powerful heavyweights find it difficult to end a bout against an experienced and fit opponent with only one well-timed blow.

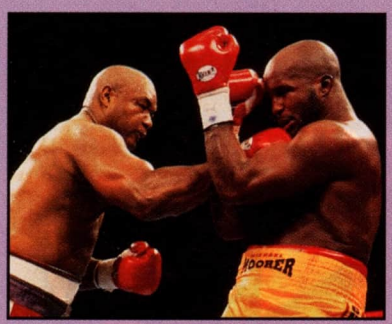
Prior to THE RING's debut in 1922, the most famous one-punch knockout was Bob Fitzsimmons' kayo of James J. Corbett in 1897. Using his famous solar plexus punch off a shift, Fitz proved once again that a well-placed body shot to the "mark" or "wind," as it was called in the old days, could be just as effective as a shot to the "chops."

By the way, in this category, glass jaws shouldn't count. The most impressive one-punch knockouts have come against fighters who didn't easily collapse.



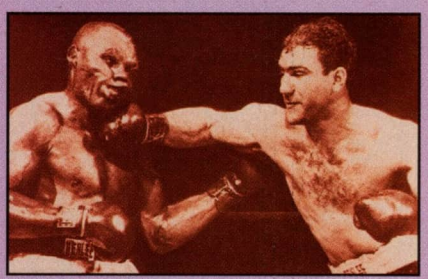
Robinson KO 5 Fullmer

Robinson KO 5 Fullmer, May 1, 1957, Chicago: The 25-year-old Fullmer, a 3-1 favorite, was superbly conditioned and seemingly impervious to punishment. Nothing less than a perfect punch would be required to take him out. In the fifth round, the 36-year-old Robinson, striking with the speed of a cobra, caught the defending middleweight champion coming in with a left hook to the point of his chin. It carried every ounce of Sugar Ray's 159½ pounds. Robinson's timing, balance, and leverage were flawless. The punch traveled so fast that even when watched in slow motion, it's a blur. It was the only time in Fullmer's 12-year career that he was counted out.



Foreman KO 10 Moorer

Foreman KO 10 Moorer, November 5, 1994, Las Vegas: This one definitely belongs in the *Guinness Book Of World Records.* Foreman, 46, was attempting to regain the heavyweight title 20 years after losing it to Muhammad Ali. Behind on points going into the 10th round, Big George, with one humongous right hand, separates Moorer from his senses and his crown.



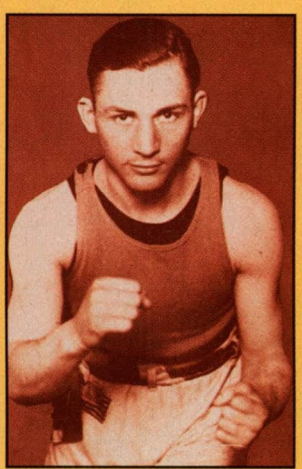
Marciano KO 13 Walcott

Marciano KO 13 Walcott, September 23, 1952, Philadelphia: The fight that proves the adage "never count a puncher out until the final bell." Behind on points going into the 13th round, "The Brockton Blockbuster" lands a right-hand bomb with an eight-inch fuse to Walcott's chin and wins the heavyweight crown in one of the greatest title fights ever.

THE BEST BOXER

The Nominees: Benny Leonard, Willie Pep, Muhammad Ali

"The Sweet Science" was first used to describe the manly art of self-defense way back in 1824. The great English boxing chronicler Pierce Egan (the Nat Fleischer of the 19th century) first used the phrase in his famous *Boxiana* series. In writing of the bare-knuckled pugilists of his day, Egan often praised their "strength," "bottom" (guts), "science," and "knowledge of the art of boxing." Of course, styles, rules, and techniques have changed over the last 173 years, but science and art can still be used to describe the sport's most skillful practitioners. Simply put, these fighters consistently hit their opponents far more than they're hit in return. And that is what boxing skill is all about.

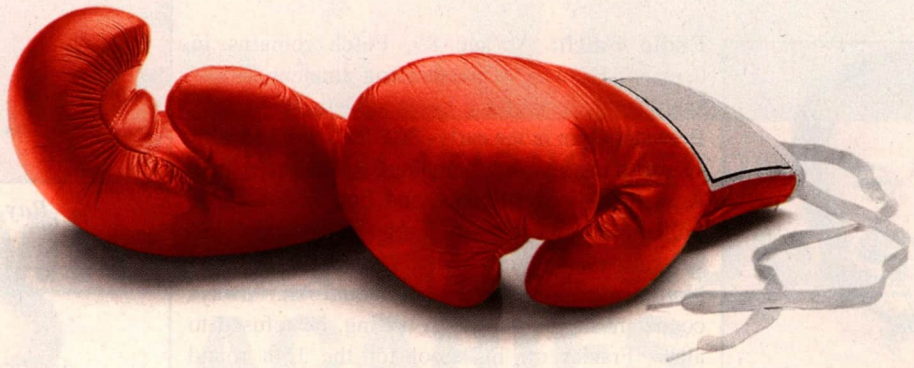


Benny Leonard

Benny Leonard: The Albert Einstein of boxing practitioners, Leonard made a scientific study of technique. This dedication resulted in only five losses in 209 fights. Leonard's stance resembled that of a fencer, and he was a master of the lost art of feinting. Ray Arcel, who trained Leonard during his comeback phase, said the New Yorker was the greatest lightweight he ever saw. (That includes Roberto Duran, who was also trained by Arcel.) Arcel said Leonard, among all his other qualities, had superior "mental energy."

(Continued on page 58)

THE RIGHT COMBINATION BUILT OUR EMPIRE.



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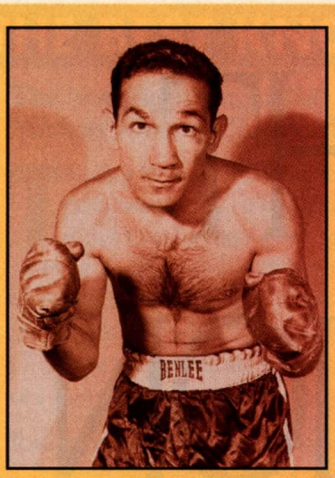
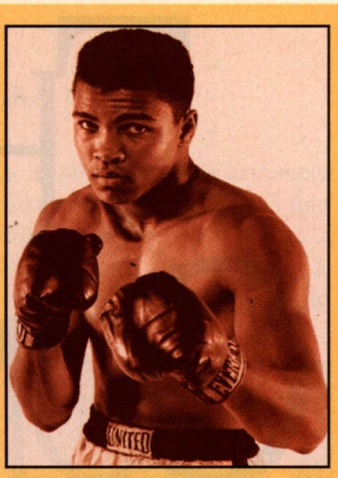


Willie Pep

Willie Pep: By necessity (he was not powerful or impressively built), "The Will O' The Wisp" had to live by his wits. Pep was a dancing, jabbing, ducking, twisting, whirling dervish of a boxer. "Fighting Pep is like trying to step on a flame," said one frustrated opponent. The 228 others defeated by Pep were no doubt similarly baffled.

Muhammad Ali: "The Greatest" had a style unlike anything ever seen in the heavyweight division. His incredible reflexes and speed, combined with his relaxed rhythmic movement and uncanny ability to pull away from punches, were for the most part the result of being blessed with an astonishing athletic prowess and instinct. Ali had to learn just enough boxing basics—jab, footwork, combinations—to start him off. The rest was all the work of a true original.



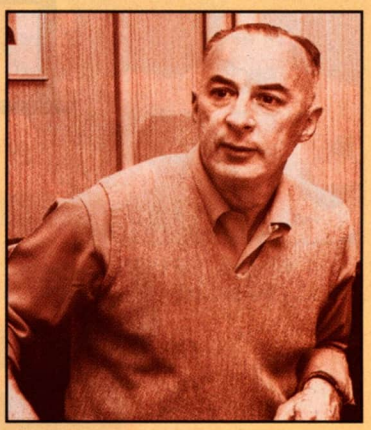
Muhammad Ali

THE BEST TRAINER

The Nominees: Ray Arcel, Eddie Futch, Angelo Dundee

A trainer is also a coach, conditioner, nutritionist, and psychologist. The best add common sense, creativity, and compassion to the mix. The mark of an outstanding trainer is his ability to take a raw, unschooled novice and fashion him into a competent prize fighter. This is no easy task. A Charley Goldman not only recognized the potential in a small, stubby-armed heavyweight named Rocky Marciano, but also possessed the knowledge and experience to turn a rough diamond into a masterpiece. And it was Jack Blackburn, a great fighter in his own right, who taught a young Joe Louis the classic moves.

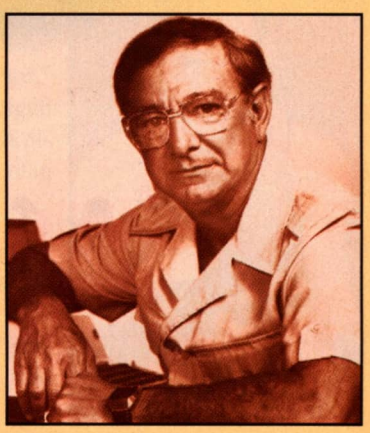
Ray Arcel: The dean of American boxing trainers was a beloved and respected figure for more than 60 years. His greatest strength was in conditioning a fighter and devising overall strategy. Arcel's skills were absolutely indispensable in the corner. He trained hundreds of fighters, including 19 world champions, from Abe Goldstein (1925) to Roberto Duran (1980). Arcel first learned conditioning from Welshman Dai Dollings and cornerwork from Doc Bagley, two of the best trainers from the early part of the century.



Ray Arcel

Eddie Futch

Eddie Futch: At age 85, Futch remains in demand. He was an outstanding amateur fighter and a stablemate of Joe Louis at Detroit's famous Brewster Gym in the early-'30s. He's worked with 15 world champions, including Joe Frazier, Alexis Arguello, Michael Spinks, and Bob Foster. He is brilliant at analyzing a fighter's strengths and weaknesses, and devised the strategy that Ken Norton used to bedevil Muhammad Ali. Always cognizant of the danger in boxing, he refused to allow Frazier off his stool for the 15th round against Ali in Manila. Like the other nominees in this category, Futch is a class act.



Angelo Dundee

Angelo Dundee: The most recognized trainer in boxing. He will forever be linked to Muhammad Ali, his fighter for more than 20 years. But before and after "The Greatest," he trained and cornered 10 world champs (including Sugar Ray Leonard) and dozens of contenders. He is an outstanding psychologist and motivator. While living in New York as a young man, he was educated at Stillman's Gym, and did graduate work at St. Nick's, among other venues of higher learning. Dundee was mentored by the great Charley Goldman. Obviously, he learned his lessons well.

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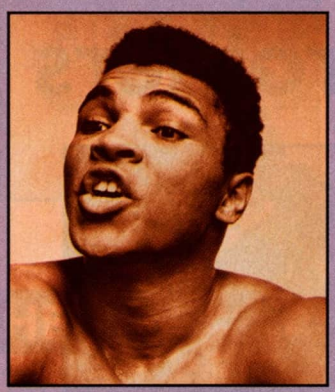
THE BEST CHIN

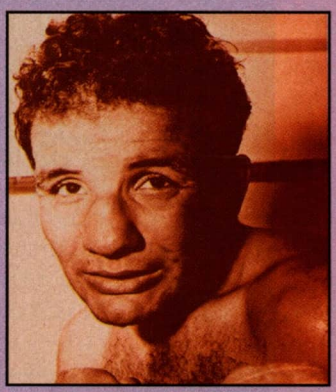
The Nominees: Muhammad Ali, Jake LaMotta, Barney Ross

There isn't much a fighter can do to improve his ability to take a punch. A great chin, like a great punch, is something one is born with. But there is also a psychological component at work. If a fighter believes he can be hurt, that belief can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those with the best shock absorbers have convinced themselves they cannot be knocked down or out. And very select few have managed to turn that belief into reality.



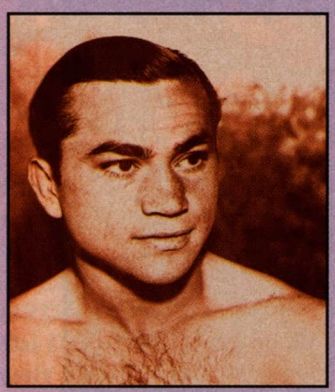
Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali: From 1960 to 1967, we never really knew what kind of chin Ali possessed. His defense was based on his amazing speed, reflexes, and footwork. He was so damn fast that he was rarely hit solidly. It was only after 3½ years of enforced inactivity that the question was finally answered, and what we learned only served to confirm Ali's greatness. It turned out that Ali's chin was connected to his great pride and ego. As he aged, a slower and often poorly conditioned Ali relied on his "rope-a-dope" strategy, which exposed him to much punishment. At the latest, he should have retired after his third fight with Ken Norton. But he continued for five more years, taking countless punches. He proved he could still take it, but paid a terrible price in doing so.



Jake LaMotta

Jake LaMotta: "The Raging Bull" *looked* like a guy who could take a punch; his huge head was built for punishment. A lot of people think he took more punches than he did. In reality, he was an expert at riding with punches. LaMotta took on the bruisers everyone else feared. The hardest-punching middleweights and light heavyweights couldn't topple this iron man. When a washed-up LaMotta, in his 103rd pro fight, was finally knocked down for the first time (by Danny Nardico), news of the event made headlines throughout the world.



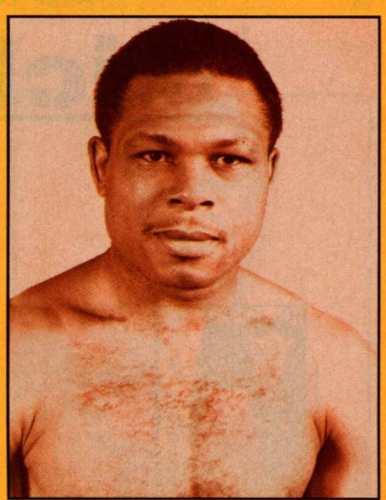
Barney Ross

Barney Ross: Surprised? Don't be. An all-time great, Ross had a chin that withstood the dynamite punches of the best fighters of his era. He fought as a lightweight and welterweight when those divisions were arguably the toughest and most competitive of all. Ross was never knocked out in 82 bouts, though guys named Canzoneri, Armstrong, Garcia, Petrolle, McLarnin, and Miller tried their damndest to stop him.

THE BEST PUNCHER

The Nominees: Archie Moore, Joe Louis, George Foreman

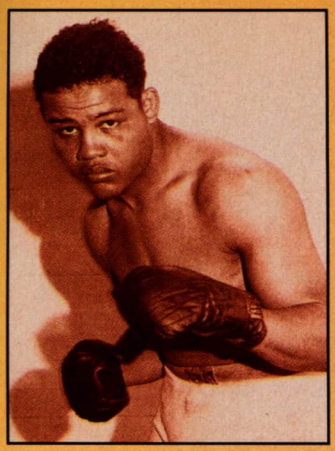
One of the first things a young boxer learns is how to punch properly. Some fighters are born punchers, but even they must be instructed in proper technique. Hitting with leverage, snap, and the weight of the body behind each blow is an acquired art. It may take years of study and practice to perfect it. And when it is perfected, the results are both dramatic and devastating.



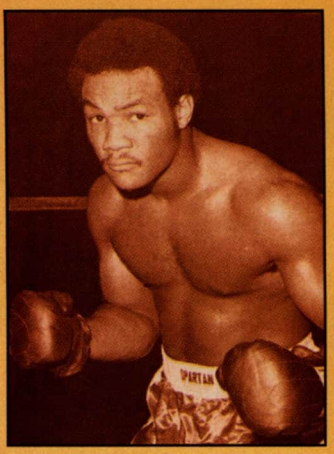
Archie Moore

Archie Moore: The all-time kayo king, with 145 knockouts in 234 fights. What is truly remarkable is that Moore accomplished the feat fighting the best men three decades had to offer. But you had to be more than just a great puncher to knock out the likes of Holman Williams, Jimmy Bivins, Lloyd Marshall, Ron Richards, Cocoa Kid, and Harold Johnson. The key: Moore, an ultra-seasoned boxer-puncher with kayo power in either fist, was a place-puncher. He knew exactly where to hit an opponent to do the most damage. "The Ol' Mongoose" was expert at laying a trap, waiting for the right opportunity, and then striking at a specific target (the liver, under the heart, the point of the chin, the temple) with pinpoint accuracy.

Joe Louis: Jimmy Braddock, who lost the heavyweight title to Louis in 1937, was once asked what it felt like to be hit by "The Brown Bomber's" punch. "It ain't like a punch," Braddock said. "It's like someone nailed you with a crowbar." Louis' other 53 knockout victims would no doubt agree. All of the punches in his arsenal were deadly; his jab was a battering ram equal in power to an ordinary heavyweight's best right cross. Louis was a born puncher, but the refinement in style taught by Jack Blackburn enabled the heavyweight to put every ounce of his 200 pounds into every punch. Louis threw perhaps the hardest punch of his life the night he kayoed the previously indestructible Paolino Uzcudun in 1935.



Joe Louis



George Foreman

George Foreman: Almost freakish in terms of the frightening power he possessed. Most heavyweights fell like bowling pins before Foreman's ham-like fists. He was extremely dangerous in the early rounds, and only the toughest and smartest could hope to survive the Foreman onslaught circa 1969-77. Even in his old age, he was able to reach back in time and land one more bomb to flatten Michael Moorer to win back the heavyweight crown 20 years after losing it to Muhammad Ali.

THE BEST ANNOUNCER

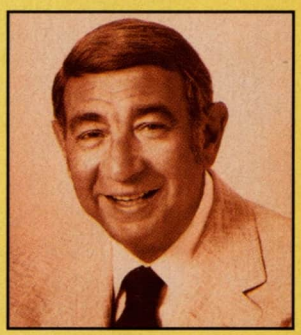
The Nominees: Don Dunphy, Howard Cosell, Sam Taub

The first world championship match to be broadcast on radio was Jack Dempsey-Georges Carpentier in July 1921. Radio broadcasting of major fights quickly became a very popular feature of the airwaves. Listening to a fight on radio had a special feel and excitement all its own. The announcer was crucial, of course, for he conveyed the narrative of the match to millions of listeners.

When, in the '50s, television became the dominant mode of transmission, the announcer's role changed. No longer was it necessary to keep up a running commentary of the action. Nevertheless, what was said, and when it was said, would detract or add to the armchair fan's enjoyment.

Don Dunphy

Don Dunphy: Internationally known as "The Voice Of Boxing." From 1941 to 1960 on radio, and from '60 to '64 on television, Dunphy was the announcer for *The Gillette Cavalcade Of Sports Fight Of The Week.* He called many of the major fights of the century. His rapid-fire delivery on radio was incredibly accurate, and his dulcet tones were easy on the ear. Upon switching to television, he was never intrusive or loud.



Howard Cosell

Howard Cosell: Insufferable at times, but rarely dull. Cosell was an enormously intelligent man with a huge ego, and he knew how to promote himself and the event he was part of. He had a sense of the dramatic. When Cosell announced a bout, it instantly took on an air of importance. Intellectually, he was far ahead his contemporaries. (And he usually let them know it.) He was even smart enough to fool a lot of people into thinking he was a boxing expert. Both the most loved and hated broadcaster of his time.

Sam Taub: There are only a few existing recordings of Taub announcing some of the 7,000 bouts he broadcast over the radio from the '20s to the '40s. He was a true pioneer of the airwaves and a genuine boxing expert. His dramatic New York-accented delivery was both exciting and memorable. The broadcasting award presented by the Boxing Writers Association of America is named after Taub. ■

Sam Taub

Mike Silver, a boxing historian, is a frequent contributor to The Ring.

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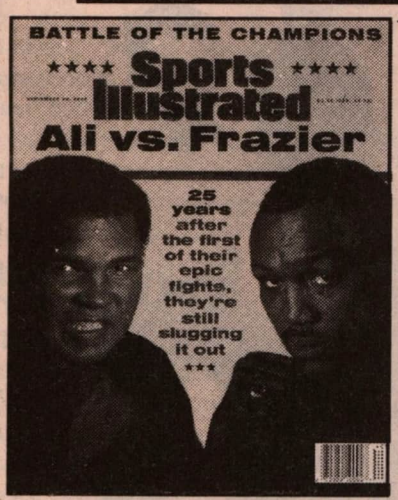

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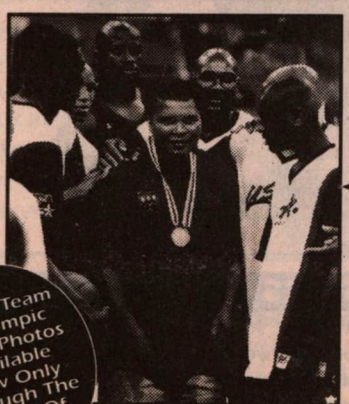

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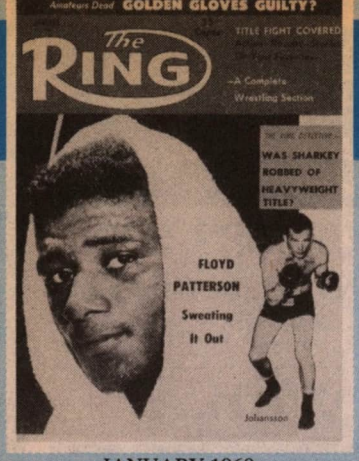


JANUARY 1960

1960

It Also Happened

Floyd Patterson becomes the first heavyweight to regain the title, kayoing Ingemar Johansson in the fifth … Thailand crowns its first world champ when Pone Kingpetch dethrones fly titlist Pascual Perez via split 15-round verdict … A 4-1 underdog, Paul Pender takes the middleweight crown from 38-year-old Sugar Ray Robinson by 15-round decision … Cuba's Benny Paret overpowers Don Jordan and wins the welter crown on points (W 15) … Heavyweight Lamar Clark sets the all-time consecutive kayo record with 44 … Flash Elorde takes the junior light title, stopping Harold Gomes in seven … Eder Jofre becomes Brazil's first champ, winning the NBA bantam crown with a sixth-round kayo of Eloy Sanchez … Italy's Duilio Loi unseats junior welter king Carlos Ortiz on points (W 15) … Cassius Clay and Fighting Harada turn pro.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Floyd Patterson KO 5 Ingemar Johansson. Johansson is an 8-5 favorite to again defeat Patterson, but this time the American is watchful for Ingo's right. After having his knees buckled in the second, Patterson regains control in the third, scoring with hooks. In the fifth, he floors Johansson twice, the second time for several minutes.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

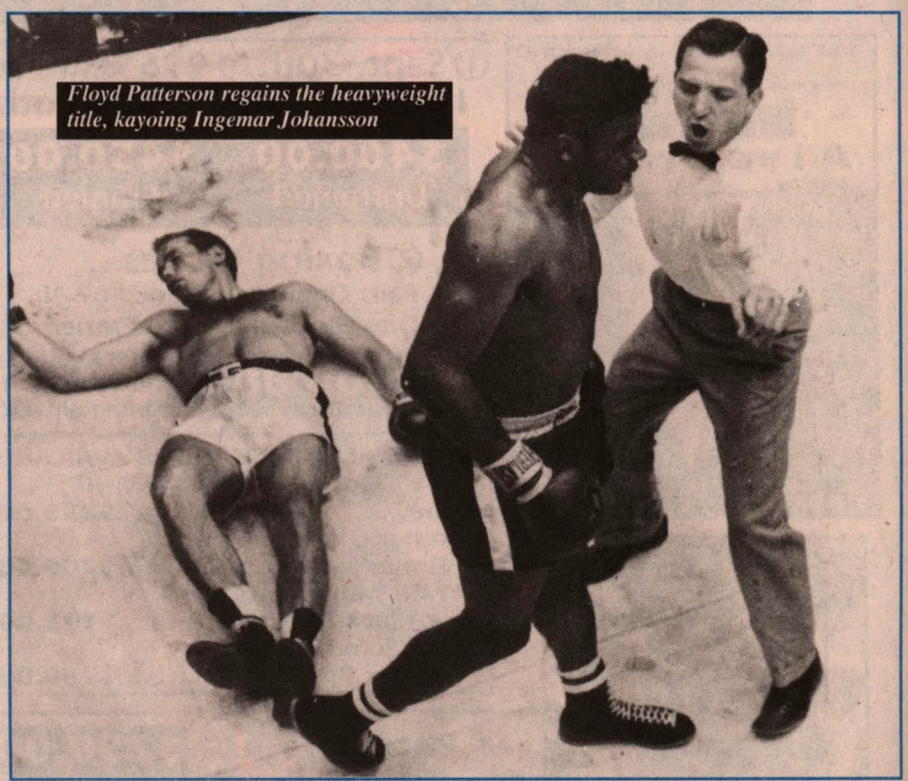
Floyd Patterson. Succeeding where James J. Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons, James J. Jeffries, Jack Dempsey, Max Schmeling, Joe Louis, Ezzard Charles, and Jersey Joe Walcott had all failed, Patterson makes ring history by regaining the heavyweight title with a fifth-round knockout of Ingemar Johansson. Patterson goes to 36-2 (27).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Eloy Sanchez KO 8 Jose Becerra. Bantamweight champion Becerra, 70-4-2 (42), has won his last 23 bouts, including a pair of defenses. He is heavily favored for this non-title bout, but takes a beating before being knocked out in the eighth. Immediately after, he announces his retirement.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Floyd Patterson-Ingemar Johansson (5). Patterson floors Johansson with two hooks to the jaw early in the round. When the Swede gets up, Patterson unloads a left-right, then follows with a tremendous hook. Johansson, flat on his back, his right leg trembling, is unconscious for eight minutes as Patterson regains the heavyweight title.



Floyd Patterson regains the heavyweight title, kayoing Ingemar Johansson

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Gene Fullmer
Welterweight: Benny Paret
Junior Welterweight: Carlos Ortiz
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch

1961

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Brown W 15 Dave Charnley. In their rematch—Brown had stopped Charnley on cuts in 1959—Charnley thrills the crowd at Earls Court. Despite cuts over his right eye and on his nose, the challenger attacks, and Brown, scoring with his jab and counterpunching, fights in retreat. At the final bell, many expect a new lightweight champion to be crowned, but referee Tommy Little's vote narrowly favors Brown.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

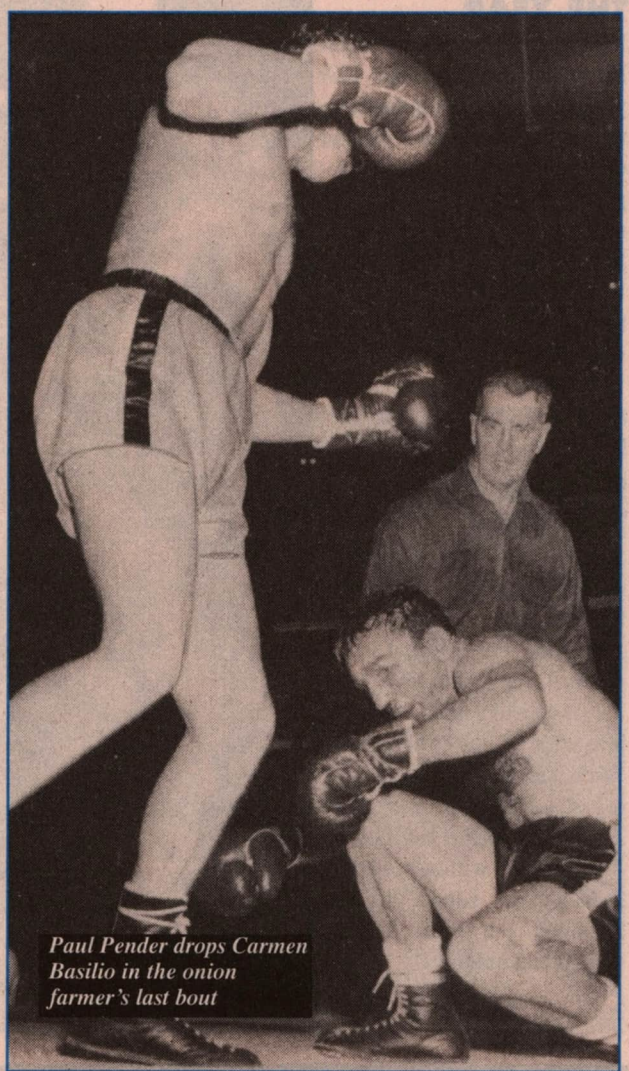
Joe Brown. "Old Bones," lightweight champion since 1956, finally gets his due. After taking a 10-rounder from Joey Parks (a non-title bout), Brown defends in London with a thrilling 15-round decision over Dave Charnley. He finishes the year with a 15-round decision over Bert Somodio in the Philippines, advancing to 84-18-10 (38).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Terry Downes KO 10 Paul Pender. Downes, a Briton who had once served in the U. S. Marines, loses on cuts to middleweight champion Pender in January. In their rematch, it's Pender's turn to need stitching as Downes, behind early, comes on to rip open cuts over both of the titlist's eyes. The bout is stopped after nine rounds, with Downes becoming the new champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

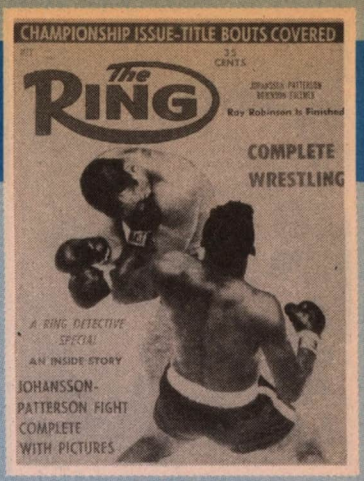
Floyd Patterson-Ingemar Johansson (1). In the first round of their rubber match, Johansson surprises Patterson, dropping him twice with rights to the head. Patterson comes back to floor his arch-rival late in the round with a hook to the jaw. He goes on to knock out Johansson in the sixth, and retain the heavyweight title.



Paul Pender drops Carmen Basilio in the onion farmer's last bout

THE BEST FIGHTERS

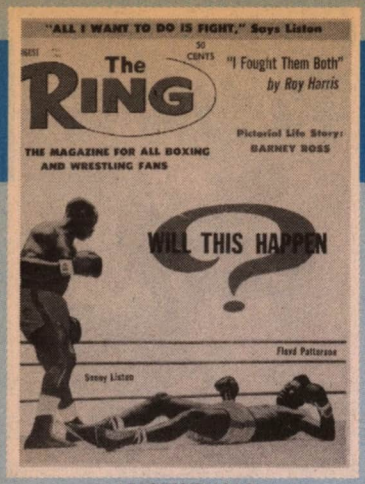
Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Harold Johnson
Middleweight: Gene Fullmer
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Duilio Loi
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch



MAY 1961

It Also Happened

Sugar Ray Robinson, 39, engages in his last title fight, dropping a 15-round decision to NBA middleweight king Gene Fullmer … Heavyweight champ Floyd Patterson and Ingemar Johansson conclude their series, with the former winning the rubber match by sixth-round kayo … Benny Paret loses the welter title to Emile Griffith, regains it, then challenges middleweight boss Gene Fullmer and gets stopped in 10 … Archie Moore, 47, makes his last title defense, outpointing Giulio Rinaldi (W 15) … Harold Johnson wins the vacant NBA light heavy crown, stopping Jesse Bowdry in nine … In his second title try, England's Terry Downes wins the world middleweight title by ninth-round stoppage of Paul Pender … Bob Foster, Nino Benvenuti, Vicente Saldivar, and Ismael Laguna turn pro … Carmen Basilio, 34, retires.



AUGUST 1962

1962

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joey Giardello W 10 Henry Hank. A decision loser to Hank the previous July, Giardello bleeds heavily from the mouth and nose from the second round on, but takes the fight to his foe, offsetting Hank's power with his own combinations. Despite being staggered in the second, seventh, and ninth, Giardello is awarded a majority decision win.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

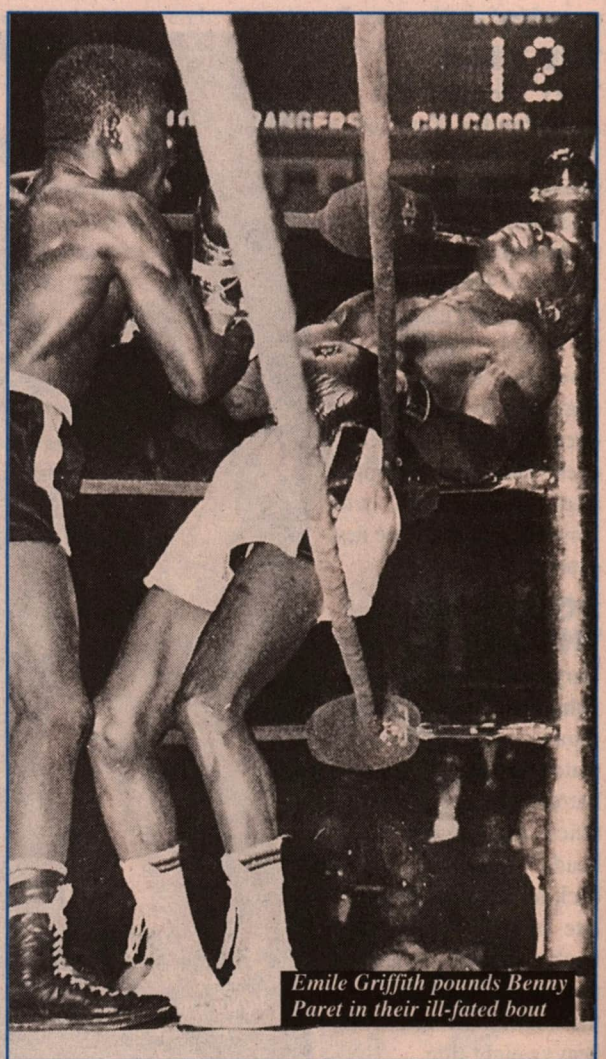
Dick Tiger. Tiger wins all three of his bouts against top competition. In January, he stops Florentino Fernandez (KO 6), then decisions Henry Hank (W 10) in March. In October, Tiger staggers WBA middleweight champ Gene Fullmer in the first and cuts him over both eyes en route to a unanimous decision victory and the title. He improves to 47-12-2 (21).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Fighting Harada KO 11 Pone Kingpetch. The 19-year-old Harada, a substitute for Sadao Yaoita, is a heavy underdog to flyweight champion Kingpetch, who is making his fourth defense. From the opening bell, Harada punishes Kingpetch to the body and shakes him with overhand rights. In the 11th, Kingpetch is counted out while seated on the bottom rope.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Sonny Liston-Floyd Patterson (1). Twenty-five pounds heavier than heavyweight champion Patterson, Liston forces his opponent back with his powerful jab, then hurts him with a hook to the body. With Patterson against the ropes, Liston rocks him with a left-right to the jaw before flooring him with a hook. At 2:06 of the round, Liston becomes the new heavyweight champion.



Emile Griffith pounds Benny Paret in their ill-fated bout

It Also Happened

The fearsome Sonny Liston needs only 126 seconds to win the heavyweight title from Floyd Patterson … Archie Moore, 48, is stripped of the light heavy title; Harold Johnson gains universal acceptance as champ when he beats Doug Jones (W 15) … Nigeria's Dick Tiger wins the WBA (formerly the NBA) middleweight crown, outpointing Gene Fullmer (W 15) … Japan's Fighting Harada, a 19-year-old substitute, dethrones fly king Pone Kingpetch (KO 11) … Junior welter titlist Duilio Loi loses the crown to Chicago's Eddie Perkins, then regains it, both by 15-round decision … After 5½ years as lightweight champ, Joe Brown, 35, loses the crown to Carlos Ortiz (W 15) … Paul Pender regains the world middleweight title from Terry Downes (W 15) … Emile Griffith regains the welter title from Benny Paret (KO 12), who dies from brain injuries 10 days after the bout.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Sonny Liston
Light Heavyweight: Harold Johnson
Middleweight: Dick Tiger
Junior Middleweight: Emile Griffith
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Duilio Loi
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch

1963

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Cassius Clay W 10 Doug Jones. A 3-1 underdog, Jones sends Clay into the ropes with a right to the head in the first round. He also enjoys a strong fourth round and leads on two cards after eight. Clay, after being shaken by another right in the ninth, comes back with a furious attack to win the final round and salvage a close decision that brings boos from many at ringside.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Cassius Clay. Aiming for a heavyweight title fight with Sonny Liston, Clay knocks out Charlie Powell (KO 3) in January. In March, he survives his toughest test in taking a 10-round decision over Doug Jones. In June, the contender is floored by Henry Cooper's left hook, but comes back to stop the British hero on cuts in five. He advances to 19-0 (15).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Rubin (Hurricane) Carter KO 1 Emile Griffith. Welterweight champ Griffith, an 11-5 favorite, and selected days before as Fighter of the Year by the Boxing Writers Association, faces second-ranked middleweight Carter. Griffith opens as the aggressor, but a hook to the body, followed by a left to the jaw, floors him for a count of nine. When Carter scores a second knockdown, the bout is stopped at 1:33 of the round.

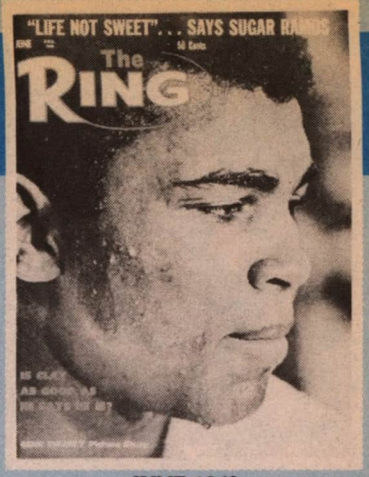
ROUND OF THE YEAR

Sonny Liston-Floyd Patterson (1). Only 20 seconds into their rematch, Liston floors Patterson with a left to the jaw. Patterson gets up, but Liston downs him again, this time with a right to the head. When the challenger arises, he unloads a right to the jaw. Liston doesn't even feel the blow, and he finishes Patterson at the 2:10 mark to retain the heavyweight title.

Junior lightweight champ Flash Elorde (right) guns for Love Allotey

THE BEST FIGHTERS

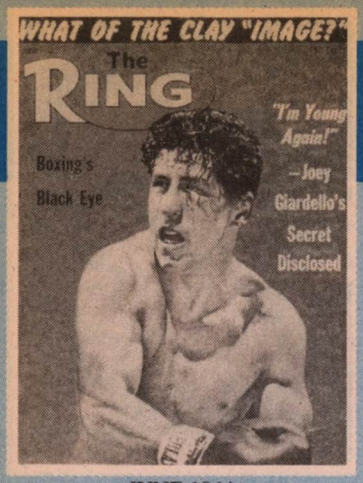
Heavyweight: Sonny Liston
Light Heavyweight: Willie Pastrano
Middleweight: Dick Tiger
Junior Middleweight: Ralph Dupas
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Eddie Perkins
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Sugar Ramos
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch



JUNE 1963

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Sonny Liston repeats his first-round kayo of Floyd Patterson, this time needing 130 seconds … Cautious Willie Pastrano, a 5-1 underdog, takes the light heavy title from Harold Johnson (W 15) … Luis Rodriguez wins the welter crown from Emile Griffith (W 15); three months later, Griffith takes the rematch (W 15) … Filipino Roberto Cruz captures the vacant junior welter crown, surprising Battling Torres by first-round kayo; Cruz then loses the belt to Eddie Perkins by 15-round decision … Pone Kingpetch regains the fly title, scoring a narrow 15-round verdict over Fighting Harada; the Thai then loses the crown to Japanese southpaw Hiroyuki Ebihara in one … Feather champ Davey Moore dies four days after suffering head injuries in his 11th-round title fight loss to Sugar Ramos … Gene Fullmer, 32, fights for the last time, losing by eighth-round TKO to middleweight boss Dick Tiger; Joey Giardello subsequently takes the title from Tiger (W 15) … Carlos Monzon turns pro … Ingemar Johansson, 30, retires.



JUNE 1964

1964

It Also Happened

"I shocked the world!" Cocky 22-year-old Cassius Clay, a 7-1 underdog, wins the heavyweight title when Sonny Liston quits on his stool at the start of round seven … Junior lightweight king Flash Elorde moves up, but gets stopped in 14 by lightweight champ Carlos Ortiz … Pone Kingpetch wins the fly title for the third time, decisioning Hiroyuki Ebihara (W 15) … Mexican southpaw Vicente Saldivar takes the feather title by overpowering Sugar Ramos (KO 12) … Unbeaten bantam boss Eder Jofre, 45-0-3, stops Bernardo Caraballo in seven, cementing his status as boxing's best fighter, pound-for-pound … Welter champ Emile Griffith wins his fourth and last battle with Luis Rodriguez (W 15) … Antonio Cervantes and Ruben Olivares turn pro.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Cassius Clay KO 7 Sonny Liston. The fleet-footed Clay surprises Liston by scoring repeatedly with jabs and combinations. In the third, a right opens a deep cut under Liston's right eye. Clay has a rough fifth, when ointment gets into his eyes, but comes back strongly to shake Liston in the sixth. When the bell rings for round seven, Liston stays on his stool, claiming an injured shoulder, and Clay, soon to be Muhammad Ali, becomes heavyweight champion.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

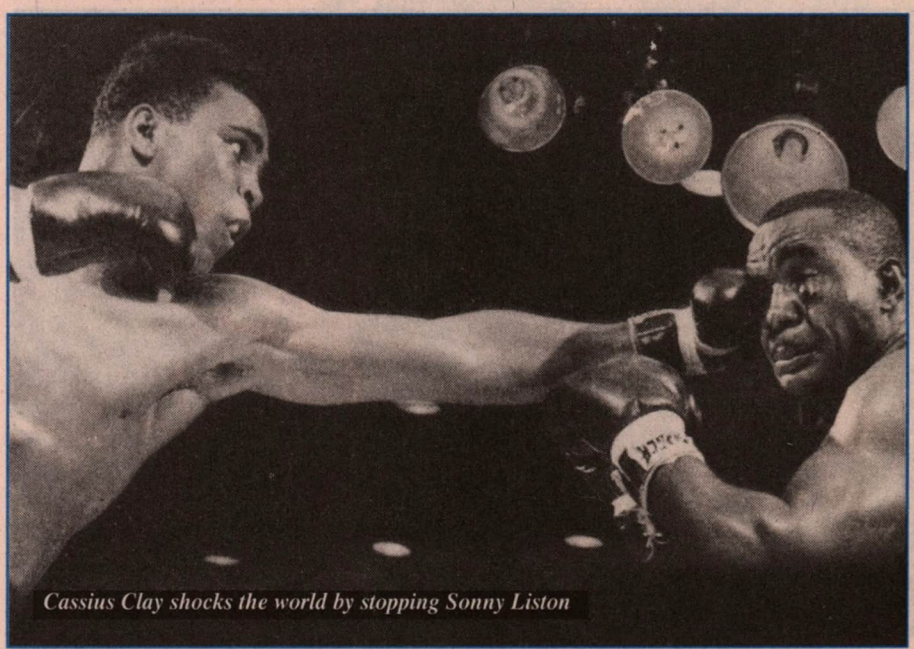
Emile Griffith. Griffith opens the year with a three-round knockout of Ralph Dupas. Then, after a no-contest vs. Juan Carlos Duran, he stops Stan Harrington before defending the welter title with 15-round decisions over Luis Rodriguez and Brian Curvis. He ends the year with a ninth-round kayo of Dave Charnley to go to 43-5 (16).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Cassius Clay KO 7 Sonny Liston. Despite all his prefight boasting, Clay is a 7-1 underdog to heavyweight champion Liston. Fighting with his hands down, the challenger bewilders Liston with his hand speed, cutting him under the left eye and beating him to the punch. The end comes suddenly, with Liston electing to remain on his stool at the start of round seven, prompting Clay to repeatedly shout, "I shocked the world!"

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jose Torres-Bobo Olson (1). Gunning for the light heavyweight title held by Willie Pastrano, Torres faces former middleweight champion Olson. Opening quickly, Torres soon has Olson in trouble. A right to the body knocks the wind out of the veteran, and a barrage drops him for the full count.



Cassius Clay shocks the world by stopping Sonny Liston

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Cassius Clay
Light Heavyweight: Willie Pastrano
Middleweight: Joey Giardello
Junior Middleweight: Sandro Mazzinghi
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Eddie Perkins
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Vicente Saldivar
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch

1965

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Floyd Patterson W 12 George Chuvalo. In the guttiest victory of his career, Patterson batters the rock-hard Chuvalo despite an injured left hand. Chuvalo, cut over the left eye, his face swollen, comes back in the 10th to have Patterson out on his feet. The former champion, however, refuses to fall, rallying over the final two rounds for a unanimous decision victory.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

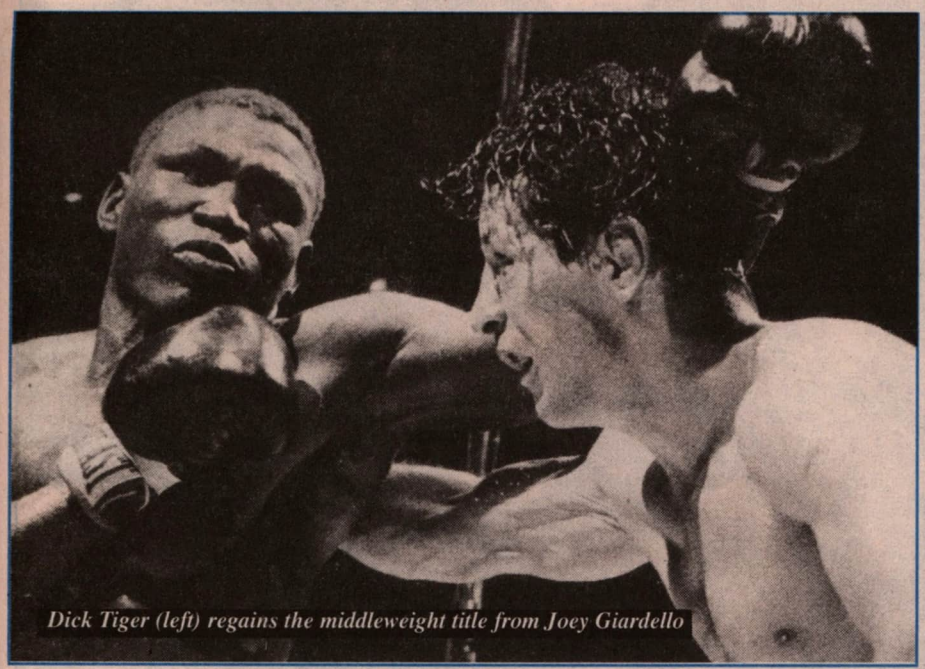
Dick Tiger. Having lost the middleweight title to Joey Giardello in 1963, Tiger waits two years for the rematch. After stopping Rocky Rivero (KO 6) in March, he floors Rubin Carter four times in winning a 10-round decision in May. In October, Tiger thrashes Giardello over 15 rounds to regain the title, going to 53-14-1 (24).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Fighting Harada W 15 Eder Jofre. Considered the best fighter in the world, Jofre is 47-0-3, and has been bantam champ for four years. In his eighth defense, however, former flyweight champ Harada outhustles him, hurting the Brazilian in the fourth and constantly outscoring him. After 15 torrid rounds, Jofre is unbeaten no longer as Harada wins a split decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jose Torres-Willie Pastrano (6). Torres dominates from round one, hurting light heavy champ Pastrano several times. In the sixth, he lands a terrific right to the body. In a delayed reaction, Pastrano sinks to the canvas. It is the first knockdown of his career. Torres wins the title when Pastrano is unable to continue after nine rounds.



Dick Tiger (left) regains the middleweight title from Joey Giardello

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Jose Torres
Middleweight: Dick Tiger
Junior Middleweight: Nino Benvenuti
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Carlos Hernandez
Lightweight: Ismael Laguna
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Vicente Saldivar
Bantamweight: Fighting Harada
Flyweight: Salvatore Burruni

JULY 1965

It Also Happened

Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) keeps the heavyweight title by one-punch first-round kayo of Sonny Liston … A relative unknown, Panama's 21-year-old Ismael Laguna shocks defending lightweight champ Carlos Ortiz (W 15); seven months later, Ortiz wins the rematch (W 15) … Sugar Ray Robinson, 44, fights for the last time, dropping a 10-round decision to top-rated middleweight Joey Archer … Carlos Hernandez becomes Venezuela's first world champ when he wins the junior welter crown from Eddie Perkins (W 15) … In a boring fight, Ernie Terrell takes the vacant WBA heavy title, outpointing Eddie Machen (W 15) … Jose Torres captures the light heavy title from Willie Pastrano (KO 10) … Italy's Salvatore Burruni wins the fly belt by 15-round verdict over Pone Kingpetch … Dick Tiger regains the middleweight title from Joey Giardello (W 15) … Fighting Harada becomes a two-division champ by dethroning bantam boss Eder Jofre (W 15) … Joe Frazier, Ken Buchanan, Rodolfo Martinez, and Kuniaki Shibata turn pro.

DECEMBER 1966

1966

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jose Torres W 15 Eddie Cotton. The veteran Cotton, 40, gives an inspired performance through 10 rounds and leads on all cards against light heavy champ Torres. He then fades, however. After a desperate rally in the 13th, Torres comes back to take the final two rounds, hurting Cotton in the 15th and retaining the title by close but unanimous decision.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

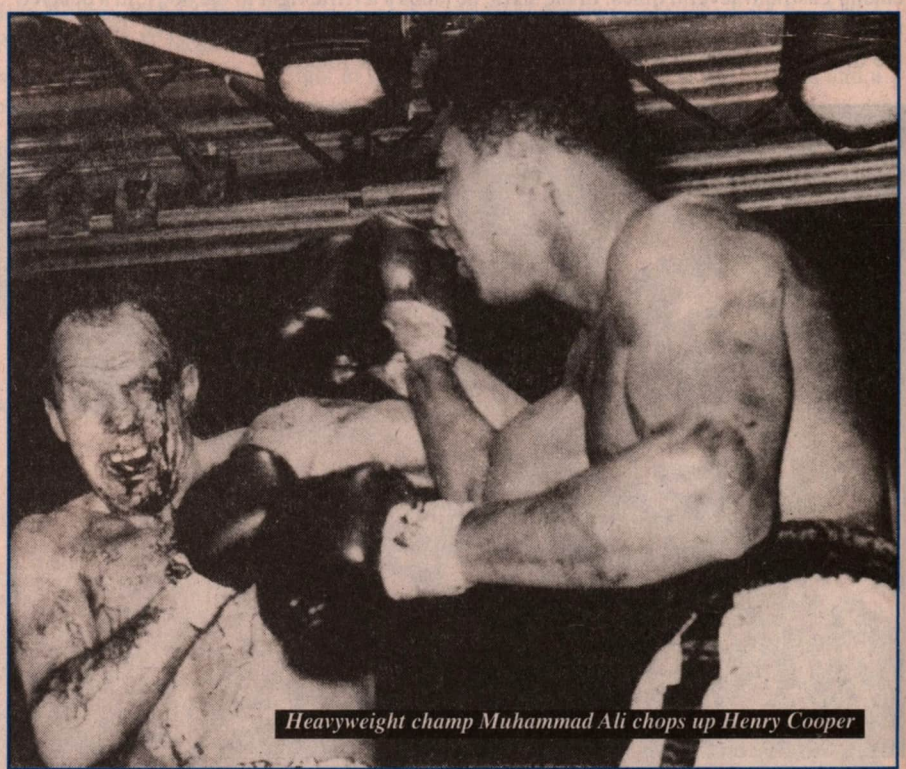
No Award

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Ki Soo Kim W 15 Nino Benvenuti. WBA junior middle champ Benvenuti, 64-0, is fighting outside of his native Italy for the first time when he travels to South Korea to face Kim. Bulling his way inside, Kim's body attack and southpaw stance confuse Benvenuti. After 15 close rounds, Kim wins a split decision and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Carlos Ortiz-Sugar Ramos (5). Lightweight champion Ortiz, down in the second, comes back to badly cut former feather champ Ramos' left eye. In the fifth, after the ringside physician has refused referee Billy Conn's requests to examine the challenger (whose eye is now swollen shut), the third man stops the bout, declaring Ortiz the TKO winner. A riot breaks out, but despite threats by the Mexican commission to overrule Conn, the decision stands.



Heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali chops up Henry Cooper

It Also Happened

Heavyweight Muhammad Ali puts the "world" in world champ, defending in Toronto, London (twice), and Frankfurt ... Scaling only 150½, welter king Emile Griffith moves up and takes Dick Tiger's middleweight title (W 15); Curtis Cokes subsequently wins the vacant WBA title, outpointing Manuel Gonzalez (W 15) ... Ki Soo Kim becomes the first world champ from South Korea, issuing Nino Benvenuti his first loss in 66 bouts and winning the junior middle title by 15-round decision ... The flyweight title becomes splintered (it hasn't been unified since), and at year's end, the champs are Chartchai Chionoi (WBC) and Horacio Accavallo (WBA) ... Lightweight king Carlos Ortiz defends against a former world champ, Sugar Ramos (KO 5), and a reigning titlist, junior light boss Flash Elorde (KO 14) ... Former middleweight champ Randy Turpin, 37, commits suicide ... Bobo Olson, 38, retires.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Jose Torres
Middleweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Middleweight: Ki Soo Kim
Welterweight: Curtis Cokes
Junior Welterweight: Sandro Lopopolo
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Vicente Saldivar
Bantamweight: Fighting Harada
Flyweight: Horacio Accavallo

1967

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Nino Benvenuti W 15 Emile Griffith. Making his American debut, Benvenuti wows 'em at Madison Square Garden. The European middleweight champ and Olympic gold medalist, a 7-2 underdog, floors 160-pound titlist Griffith in the second. Griffith rebounds to down Benvenuti in the fourth, but the challenger rallies to take a unanimous decision and the belt.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Joe Frazier. The 1964 Olympic heavyweight champion, Frazier wins six times, scoring five knockouts. "Smokin' Joe" opens the year with kayos over Doug Jones and Jeff Davis, then pounds out a 10-round decision over Scrap Iron Johnson and stops Canadian veteran George Chuvalo in four. Frazier finishes the year with kayos of Tony Doyle and Marion Connors to advance to 19-0 (17).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Oscar Bonavena W 12 Karl Mildenberger. In the quarterfinals of the WBA heavyweight championship tournament, the southpaw Mildenberger, a gutty loser to Muhammad Ali the year before, is a 5-1 favorite to defeat Bonavena. But the Argentine strongman shocks the German, flooring him four times and taking a lopsided decision.

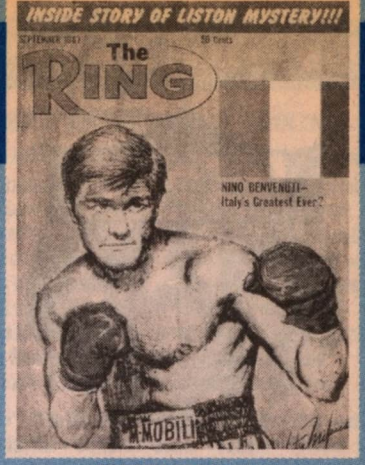
ROUND OF THE YEAR

Dick Tiger-Roger Rouse (12). Rouse boxes well in the early rounds against light heavyweight champion Tiger, but is floored in the ninth and 10th. In the 12th, badly cut in the mouth and tiring, Rouse is gamely trading with Tiger when a right to the head floors him. He beats the count, but referee Jimmy Olivas wisely stops the bout.

Emile Griffith and Nino Benvenuti trade punches at Madison Square Garden

THE BEST FIGHTERS

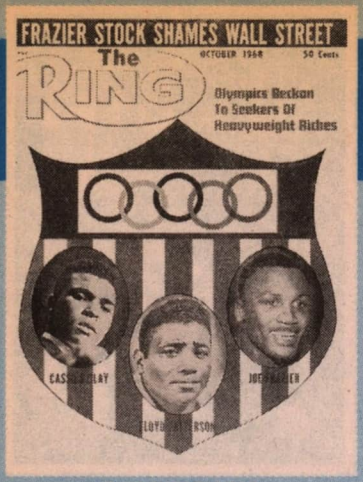
Heavyweight: Jimmy Ellis
Light Heavyweight: Dick Tiger
Middleweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Middleweight: Ki Soo Kim
Welterweight: Curtis Cokes
Junior Welterweight: Paul Fujii
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Yoshiaki Numata
Featherweight: Vicente Saldivar
Bantamweight: Fighting Harada
Flyweight: Chartchai Chionoi



SEPTEMBER 1967

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali's ninth defense, a seventh-round kayo of Zora Folley, turns out to be his last fight for 3½ years. Ali refuses induction into the Armed Services on religious grounds and is instantly stripped and suspended … Nino Benvenuti, a 5-2 underdog, takes the middleweight title from Emile Griffith (W 15); five months later, Griffith regains the belt (W 15) … Lightweight champ Carlos Ortiz wins his rubber match vs. Ismael Laguna … Featherfisted Japanese Yoshiaki Numata surprises defending junior light titlist Flash Elorde by 15-round decision; Numata then loses the crown to countryman Hiroshi Kobayashi (KO 12) … After defeating Howard Winstone for the third time, feather king Vicente Saldivar, 24, retires … Hawaiian-born, Japan-based junior welter Paul Fujii wins the world crown, crushing Sandro Lopopolo in two … Roberto Duran and Ken Norton turn pro … Eder Jofre, 30, and Joey Giardello, 37, retire.



OCTOBER 1968

It Also Happened

Jimmy Ellis wins a tournament to determine the WBA heavyweight champ, outpointing Jerry Quarry in the finals (W 15); Joe Frazier also gains partial recognition, winning the New York world crown by crushing Buster Mathis in 11 … Lionel Rose, a 19-year-old substitute from Australia, wins the bantam title, decisioning Fighting Harada (W 15) … With the feather title split, Spain's Jose Legra (WBC) and Japan's Shozo Saijyo (WBA) emerge as champs … Nino Benvenuti wins his rubber match (and regains the middleweight title) vs. Emile Griffith (W 15) … Lanky Bob Foster wins the light heavy title, scoring a one-punch kayo of Dick Tiger (KO 4) … In a major surprise, Dominican Teo Cruz dethrones lightweight king Carlos Ortiz (W 15) … Defensive master Nicolino Locche wins the WBA junior welter crown, halting Paul Fujii in 10 … Alexis Arguello turns pro.

1968

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Dick Tiger W 10 Frankie DePaula. In his first start since losing the light heavy title to Bob Foster, Tiger brawls with New York favorite DePaula. The latter wins the first round, then floors Tiger in the second. Still shaken, Tiger gets through the round before coming back to twice drop and nearly stop DePaula in the third. DePaula downs Tiger briefly in the fourth, but the former champion dominates the later rounds for a majority decision victory.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

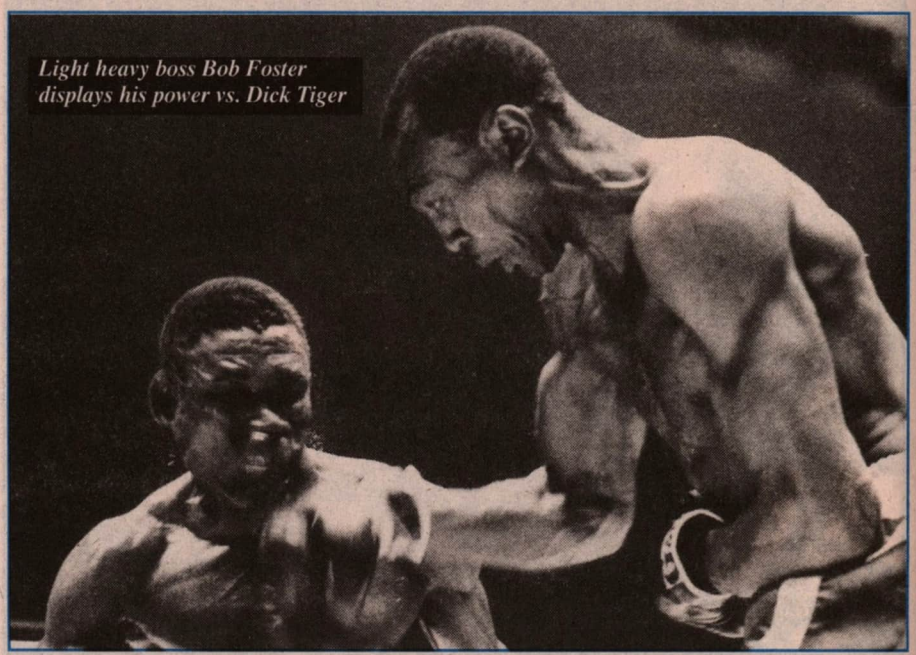
Nino Benvenuti. After having lost the middleweight title back to Emile Griffith the previous September, Benvenuti begins 1968 with a 10-round decision over Charley Austin. He then defeats Griffith over 15 rounds to regain the title. The Italian follows by engaging in four non-title bouts, winning three and fighting to a draw with Doyle Baird. He finishes the year by decisioning Don Fullmer in a defense. After a busy 12 months, his mark is 78-2-1 (32).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lionel Rose W 15 Fighting Harada. A three-day substitute for Jesus Pimentel, Rose, a 19-year-old Australian Aborigine, wears down bantamweight champion Harada, who has been weakened from making weight. Rose cuts Harada over the right eye and floors him in the ninth. He goes on to win the title by unanimous decision.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Bob Foster-Dick Tiger (4). A 6'3" veteran with tremendous punching power, Foster has significant height and reach advantages over Tiger. After using his jab through the first three rounds, he catches Tiger coming in, first with a right uppercut, then with a tremendous hook to the jaw. Foster wins the light heavyweight title as Tiger is counted out



Light heavy boss Bob Foster displays his power vs. Dick Tiger

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Frazier
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Nino Benvenuti
Junior Middleweight: Sandro Mazzinghi
Welterweight: Curtis Cokes
Junior Welterweight: Nicolino Locche
Lightweight: Teo Cruz
Junior Lightweight: Hiroshi Kobayashi
Featherweight: Jose Legra
Bantamweight: Lionel Rose
Flyweight: Chartchai Chionoi

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SEPTEMBER 1969

1969

It Also Happened

Joe Frazier makes two defenses of his share of the heavyweight title; counterpart Jimmy Ellis is inactive … Charismatic Californian Mando Ramos, 20, becomes the youngest lightweight king ever, stopping Teo Cruz in 11 … Las Vegas schoolteacher Freddie Little wins the vacant junior middle crown, decisioning Kitten Hayward (W 15) … Australia's Johnny Famechon takes the WBC feather crown, outpointing Jose Legra (W 15) … Jose Napoles certifies his greatness by winning the welter crown from an outclassed Curtis Cokes (KO 13) … Mexican sensation Ruben Olivares, 51-0-1 (49), wins the bantam title, demolishing Lionel Rose in five … Three former champs, Luis Rodriguez, Emile Griffith, and Fighting Harada, lose in title tries … Vicente Saldivar begins a comeback … Jose Torres, 33, retires … Victor Galindez and Miguel Canto turn pro.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Frazier KO 7 Jerry Quarry. Frazier, who is recognized as heavyweight champion in New York, and Quarry go toe-to-toe for the entire first round. The Californian wins the stanza, but Frazier then takes over, ripping a cut under Quarry's left eye in the third and staggering him with a hook to the jaw in the fourth. After seven rounds, a battered Quarry is unable to continue.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Jose Napoles. A Cuban refugee fighting out of Mexico City, Napoles, ducked for years, finally gets his shot, stopping Curtis Cokes after 13 rounds to win the welterweight crown. He defends twice, stopping Cokes again, this time in 10, then decisions Emile Griffith, raising his mark to 57-5 (41).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Leotis Martin KO 9 Sonny Liston. Liston, who has won 14 straight bouts since losing to Muhammad Ali, is a 3-1 favorite. He floors Martin in the fourth with a hook and leads after six, but the Philadelphian bloodies his nose in the seventh and eighth. In the ninth, Martin unloads a right uppercut, followed by a left-right to the jaw that knocks Liston cold.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Nino Benvenuti-Luis Rodriguez (11). After 10 rounds, middleweight champ Benvenuti is behind on points, his face a bloody mask from deep cuts over his left eye and on the bridge of his nose. In the 11th, with Rodriguez moving in, the titlist floors him for the count with a tremendous hook to the jaw.

Jose Napoles celebrates after winning the welterweight crown

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Frazier
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Nino Benvenuti
Junior Middleweight: Freddie Little
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Nicolino Locche
Lightweight: Mando Ramos
Junior Lightweight: Hiroshi Kobayashi
Featherweight: Johnny Famechon
Bantamweight: Ruben Olivares
Flyweight: Efren Torres

1970

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Carlos Monzon KO 12 Nino Benvenuti. Little-known outside his native Argentina despite a record of 70-3-9 (47), Monzon takes the fight to middleweight champ Benvenuti from the start. The Italian hurts Monzon in the seventh, but the challenger comes back to stagger Benvenuti several times before knocking him out with a right hand in the 12th. It is the beginning of a seven-year reign.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

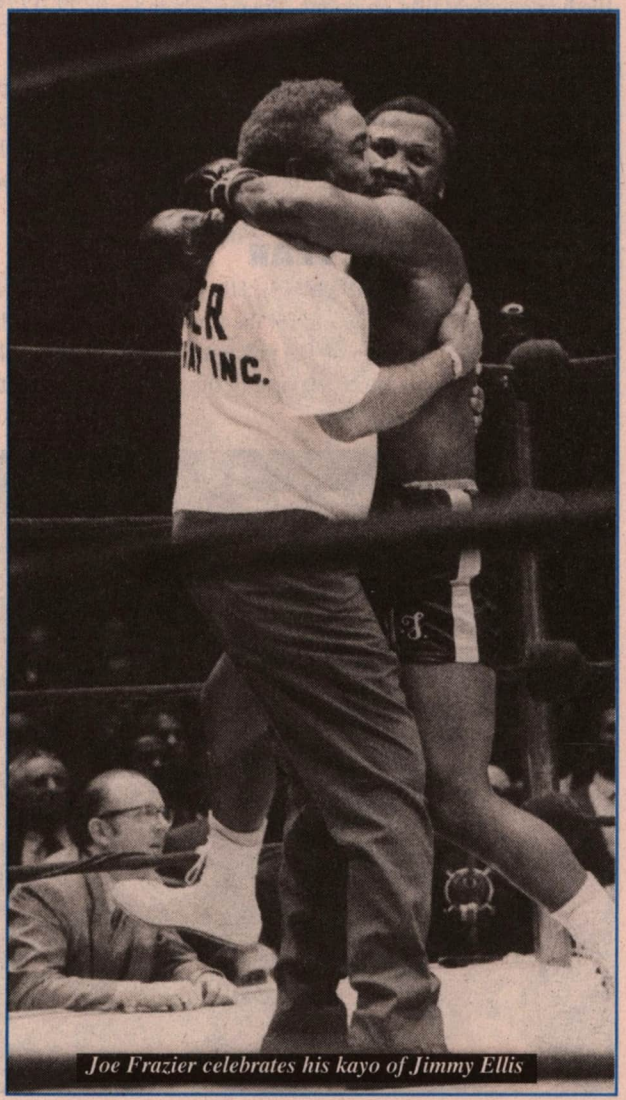
Joe Frazier. Frazier unifies the heavyweight title by stopping WBA champ Jimmy Ellis (KO 5) in February. In November, he defends against light heavy king Bob Foster, knocking him out in two and upping his record to 26-0 (23).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Billy Backus KO 4 Jose Napoles. Backus, whose uncle is former welter and middleweight champ Carmen Basilio, is a 9-1 underdog to 147-pound king Napoles. After losing the first round, he opens cuts over both of Napoles' eyes in the second, then trades evenly in the third. In the fourth, with Napoles' face covered with blood, the fight is stopped.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

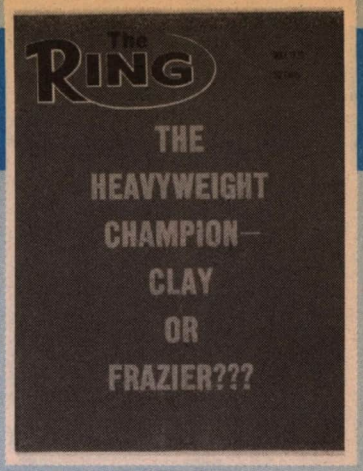
Muhammad Ali-Oscar Bonavena (15). In Ali's second fight after a three-year layoff, he leads the sturdy Bonavena after 14 rounds. Just as it appears the fight will go the limit, Ali floors the onrushing Argentine with a hook to the jaw. Bonavena rises but is still hurt, and Ali drops him twice more before the fight is stopped.



Joe Frazier celebrates his kayo of Jimmy Ellis

THE BEST FIGHTERS

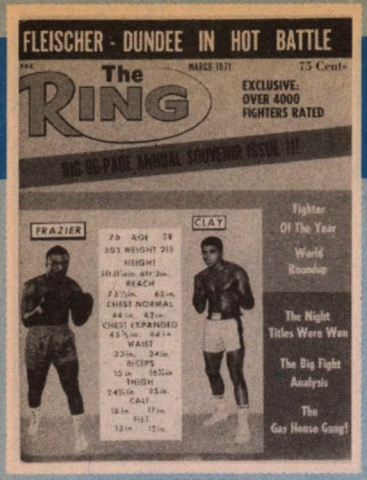
Heavyweight: Joe Frazier
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Carmelo Bossi
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Nicolino Locche
Lightweight: Ismael Laguna
Junior Lightweight: Hiroshi Kobayashi
Featherweight: Shozo Saijyo
Bantamweight: Ruben Olivares
Flyweight: Masao Ohba



MAY 1970

It Also Happened

Joe Frazier unifies the heavyweight title, crushing Jimmy Ellis in five, then finishes light heavy boss Bob Foster in two … Muhammad Ali returns to the ring … Ismael Laguna regains the lightweight title, stopping Mando Ramos on cuts in 10, then loses to Scotland's Ken Buchanan via 15-round verdict … Bantam king Ruben Olivares outpoints fellow Mexican Chucho Castillo (W 15), but loses the rematch—and the title—by 14th-round TKO … Comebacking feather Vicente Saldivar regains the WBC title, edging Johnny Famechon (W 15); Saldivar is then dethroned by Kuniaki Shibata, who stops him in 14 … Unheralded Argentine Carlos Monzon wins the middleweight title, halting Nino Benvenuti in 12 … In an even bigger upset, Billy Backus captures the welter title, stopping Jose Napoles on cuts in four … Fighting Harada and Joe Brown retire, and Carlos Zarate turns pro … Six months after stopping Chuck Wepner, Sonny Liston, 38, is found dead at his home in Las Vegas.



MARCH 1971

1971

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Joe Frazier W 15 Muhammad Ali. Heavyweight champion Frazier is 26-0 (23), while former champion Ali is 31-0 (25). On his toes, Ali pounds Frazier with his jab, but the champion works on "The Greatest's" body, pinning him against the ropes. In the 11th and 12th, Frazier hurts Ali with hooks, then decks him in the 15th en route to a well-received unanimous decision victory.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Joe Frazier. Frazier fights only once, but scores the biggest victory of his career. On March 8 at Madison Square Garden, he faces former champ Muhammad Ali in a battle of unbeatens. After setting a breathless pace, "Smokin' Joe" floors Ali in the 15th and retains the heavyweight title on points. Frazier advances to 27-0 (23).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

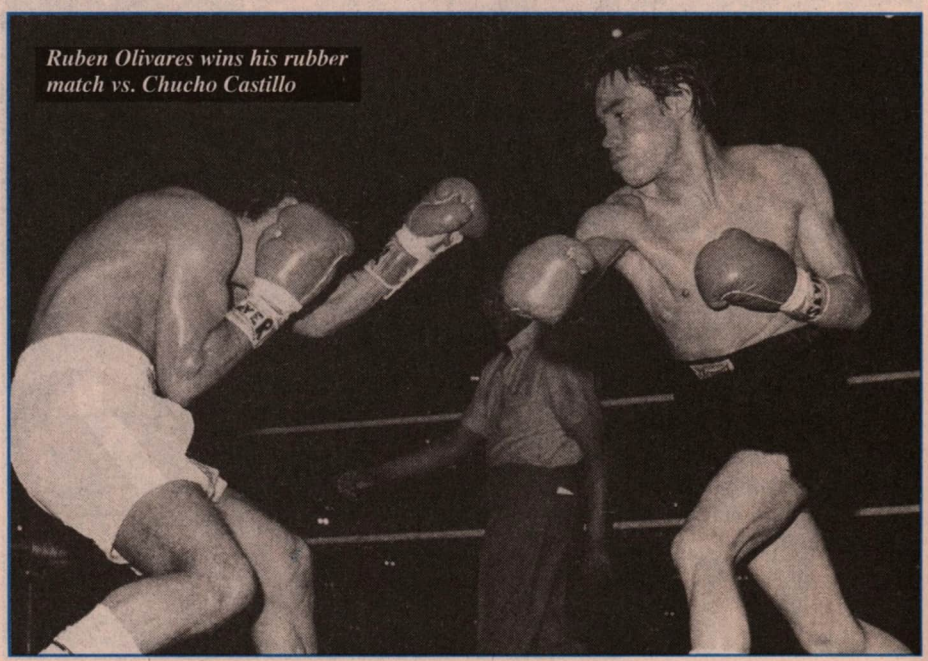
Alfredo Marcano KO 10 Hiroshi Kobayashi. Junior lightweight champ Kobayashi, titlist for four years, looks to extend his reign against Marcano, a heavy underdog. In the ninth, Kobayashi floors Marcano, but the Venezuelan challenger shocks the Japanese, flooring him with a right to the jaw. In the 10th, Marcano knocks out Kobayashi to become the new champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Joe Frazier-Muhammad Ali (15). His face lumped and swollen from Ali's jabs, Frazier is still smokin' as he comes out for the final round. Midway through, he steps inside a right and catches his rival flush on the jaw with a tremendous hook. Ali goes down on his back, the red tassels on his shoes waving in the air. He easily beats the count, but Frazier wins the round and the fight.

It Also Happened

In the most anticipated bout ever, Joe Frazier retains the heavyweight title, outpointing Muhammad Ali (W 15) in "The Fight Of The Century" … The light heavy title is split, with Vicente Rondon gaining recognition from the WBA … Nino Benvenuti, 33, loses again to middleweight king Carlos Monzon (KO by 3), then retires … A loser in five of his last nine bouts, Alfredo Marcano wins the WBA junior light title, halting Hiroshi Kobayashi in 10 … Unbeaten in 93 fights, Pedro Carrasco takes the vacant WBC lightweight title, defeating Mando Ramos by controversial 11th-round DQ … Koichi Wajima wins the junior middle crown, decisioning Carmelo Bossi (W 15) … Jose Napoles regains the welter title, stopping Billy Backus (KO 4), and Ruben Olivares takes back the bantam crown, outpointing Chucho Castillo (W 15) … Danny Lopez turns pro … Dick Tiger retires, and five months later, dies of cancer at age 42.



Ruben Olivares wins his rubber match vs. Chucho Castillo

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Frazier
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Koichi Wajima
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Nicolino Locche
Lightweight: Ken Buchanan
Junior Lightweight: Yoshiaki Numata
Featherweight: Kuniaki Shibata
Bantamweight: Ruben Olivares
Flyweight: Masao Ohba

1972

JUNE 1972

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Bob Foster KO 14 Chris Finnegan. A British southpaw and Olympic gold medalist, Finnegan thrills the hometown crowd at Wembley. Light heavy titlist Foster drops him with a right to the jaw in the 10th, but Finnegan gets up and fights on until kayoed by a hook to the jaw.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali & Carlos Monzon. Ali wins all six of his fights, including a 15-round decision over Mac Foster, a 12-round verdict over George Chuvalo, and an eighth-round kayo of Bob Foster. He advances to 40-1 (31). Middleweight champ Monzon defends four times, stopping both Denny Moyer and Tom Bogs in five and Jean-Claude Bouttier in 13, and defeating Bennie Briscoe over 15 rounds to improve to 80-3-9 (56).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Esteban DeJesus W 10 Roberto Duran. In his first fight since winning the lightweight crown from Ken Buchanan, Duran faces DeJesus in a non-title affair. Only 30 seconds into the first round, the Puerto Rican floors his rival with a hook. It is the first knockdown of the young Panamanian's career. Duran never fully recovers, suffering his first defeat by unanimous decision.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali-Bob Foster (5). Ali knocks out Foster in the eighth, but not before the light heavyweight champ gets off the deck in the fifth to nail Ali with two rights, opening a cut on "The Greatest's" left eyelid. It will be the only cut Ali suffers over the course of his entire pro career.

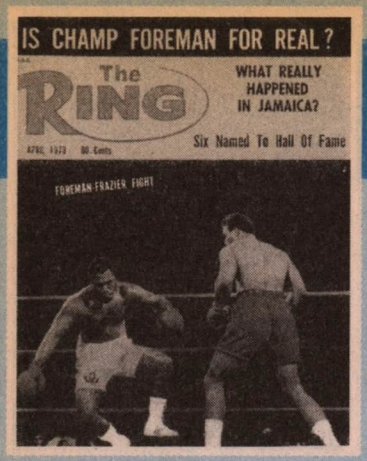
Only 20, Roberto Duran dethrones lightweight champ Ken Buchanan

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Joe Frazier
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Koichi Wajima
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Ricardo Arredondo
Featherweight: Ernesto Marcel
Bantamweight: Rafael Herrera
Flyweight: Masao Ohba

It Also Happened

Joe Frazier keeps the heavyweight title, stopping overmatched challengers Terry Daniels (KO 4) and Ron Stander (KO 5); meanwhile, Muhammad Ali defeats Mac Foster, George Chuvalo, Jerry Quarry, Blue Lewis, Floyd Patterson, and Bob Foster … The 37-year-old Patterson's seventh-round TKO loss to Ali turns out to be his last bout … Foster unifies the light heavy title, demolishing Vicente Rondon in two … Thought to be washed-up, Antonio Cervantes wins the WBA junior welter crown, knocking out Peppermint Frazer (KO 10) … Panamanian lightweight Roberto Duran, 20, wins the title by halting Ken Buchanan in 14 … Another Panamanian champ is crowned when feather Ernesto Marcel dethrones WBA king Antonio Gomez by 15-round decision … Rafael Herrera surprises bantam king Ruben Olivares (KO 8), then drops the title to Enrique Pinder by 15-round decision … Bobby Chacon, Carlos Palomino, and Pipino Cuevas turn pro … Carlos Ortiz, 35, retires.



APRIL 1973

1973

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

George Foreman KO 2 Joe Frazier. Foreman, who, like Frazier, is a former Olympic gold medalist, is a 3-1 underdog despite advantages in height, weight, and reach. He drops Frazier three times in the first round. After the champion opens the second with a left to the jaw, Foreman floors him three more times before the bout is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

George Foreman. Foreman shocks heavyweight champion Joe Frazier in January, flooring him six times in two rounds to win the title. In September, Big George kayos Joe (King) Roman in one and improves to 39-0 (36).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

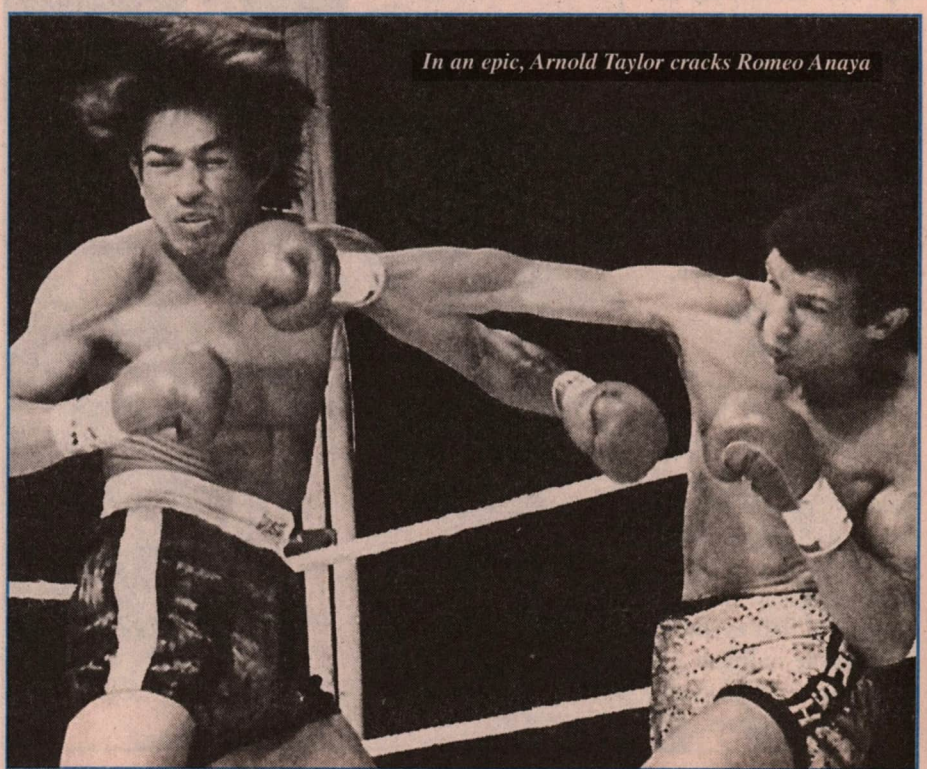
Ken Norton W 12 Muhammad Ali. Little-known outside of California, Norton is a 5-1 underdog to Ali, who is riding a 10-fight win streak. The former Marine shocks the favorite, catching Ali with looping rights, breaking his jaw early, and hurting him in the final round en route to a split decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

George Foreman-Joe Frazier (2). A desperate Frazier opens the round by catching Foreman with a hook to the jaw, but the challenger floors him with a right. Another right again drops Frazier, putting him under the ropes. After the undefeated champion rises, Foreman drops him for the last time with a barrage that ends with a hook lifting Frazier off his feet.

It Also Happened

In a shocker, George Foreman drops Joe Frazier six times and wins the heavyweight title by second-round kayo … Muhammad Ali loses for the second time, suffering a broken jaw and dropping a 12-round decision to Ken Norton; five months later, "The Greatest" wins the rematch (W 12) … There is chaos at bantamweight, with Enrique Pinder, Romeo Anaya, Rafael Herrera, and Arnold Taylor reigning at one time or another; in a wild affair, Taylor takes the WBA crown, rising from four knockdowns to stop Anaya (KO 14) … Middleweight champ Carlos Monzon is shot twice in the right arm by his wife during a domestic squabble … Capping a fantastic comeback, Eder Jofre wins the WBC feather title, outpointing Jose Legra (W 15) … Light heavy titlist Bob Foster decisions Pierre Fourie (W 15) in the first integrated bout ever held in South Africa … Eusebio Pedroza, Larry Holmes, Wilfred Benitez, and Marvin Hagler turn pro, Vicente Saldivar retires, and WBA fly champ Masao Ohba, 23, dies in a car accident.



In an epic, Arnold Taylor cracks Romeo Anaya

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: George Foreman
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Koichi Wajima
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Ricardo Arredondo
Featherweight: Eder Jofre
Bantamweight: Rafael Herrera
Flyweight: Betulio Gonzalez

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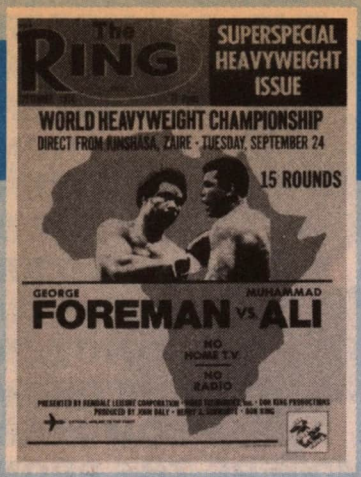


SEPTEMBER 1974

1974

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali KO 8 George Foreman. Most experts figure Ali to dance and box Foreman from the outside. Instead, he lays on the ropes and allows the champion to fire away, then fires back. By the fifth, Foreman is weary, and just before the bell, he is stunned by a right. In the eighth, Ali regains the heavyweight title by dropping Foreman for the count.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

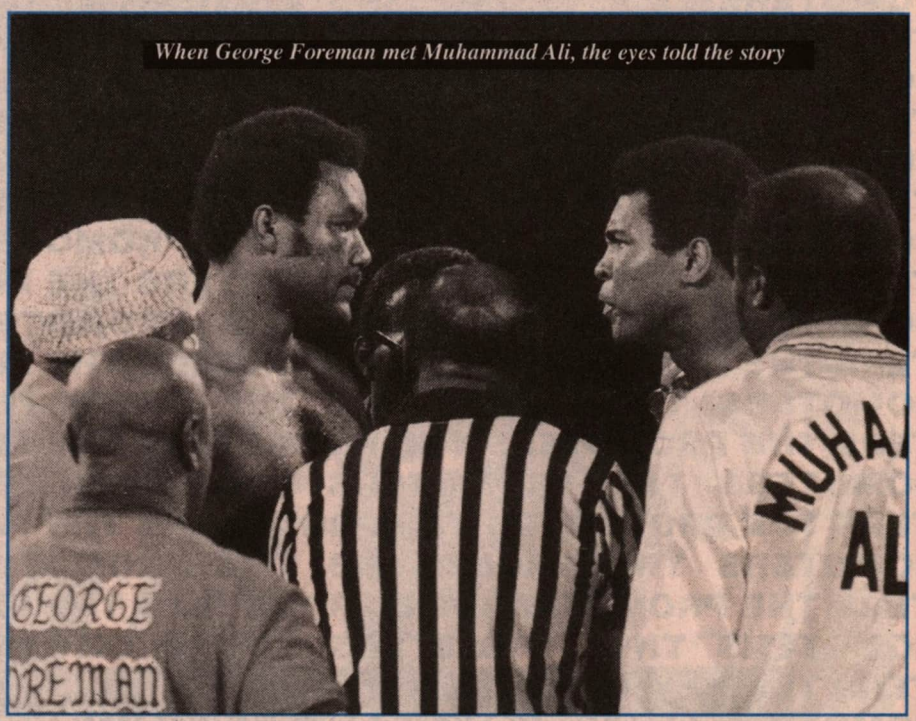
Muhammad Ali. In January, Ali reverses his previous loss to Joe Frazier by taking a unanimous 12-round decision at Madison Square Garden. In October, more than 10 years after his first defeat of Sonny Liston, he again shocks the world, regaining the heavyweight title by knocking out George Foreman (KO 8) in Zaire. He finishes the year at 45-2 (32).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali KO 8 George Foreman. Ali, 32 (Foreman is 25), is a 7-1 underdog, and has lost to Joe Frazier and Ken Norton, both of whom have been knocked out by Foreman in two rounds. Instead of jabbing and moving, "The Greatest" uses what he later calls the "rope-a-dope," leaning against the ropes and letting Foreman punch himself out. With Big George exhausted, Ali finishes him with a right hand.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali-George Foreman (8). Foreman, his eyes swollen from Ali's jabs, keeps coming at his foe, trying vainly to land a haymaker. Ali makes him miss, then counters. Late in the round, a right to the head causes Foreman to reel. Ali follows with a four-punch combination that puts Big George down and out.



When George Foreman met Muhammad Ali, the eyes told the story

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ George Foreman crushes Ken Norton (KO 2), then loses the title to 7-1 underdog Muhammad Ali in Zaire (KO by 8) … Middleweight king Carlos Monzon proves too strong for welter boss Jose Napoles, stopping him in seven … WBA lightweight champ Roberto Duran avenges his only loss, stopping Esteban DeJesus in 11 … Bob Foster vacates the light heavy title after making a division-record 14 defenses; John Conteh (WBC) and Victor Galindez (WBA) are subsequently crowned champs … Ruben Olivares wins the vacant WBA feather crown, halting Zensuke Utagawa in seven; in his first defense, he's dethroned by Alexis Arguello (KO by 13) … Bobby Chacon, 22, captures the vacant WBC feather title, stopping Alfredo Marcano in nine … Junior middle Oscar Albarado becomes only the second fighter to win a world title fight in the last round when trailing on points, halting Koichi Wajima in the 15th … Matthew (Saad Muhammad) Franklin, Lupe Pintor, and Wilfredo Gomez turn pro.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Bob Foster
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Oscar Albarado
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Kuniaki Shibata
Featherweight: Alexis Arguello
Bantamweight: Soo Hwan Hong
Flyweight: Chartchai Chionoi

1975

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali KO 14 Joe Frazier. "The Thrilla In Manila" is exactly that, as Ali and Frazier finish their trilogy with an epic. Ali wins the early rounds, jarring Frazier with right hands. Frazier takes rounds six through 10, hurting Ali several times. Somehow, Ali comes back to outlast his rival, pounding his face into a swollen mess until Eddie Futch, Frazier's trainer, refuses to let him come out for the final round.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

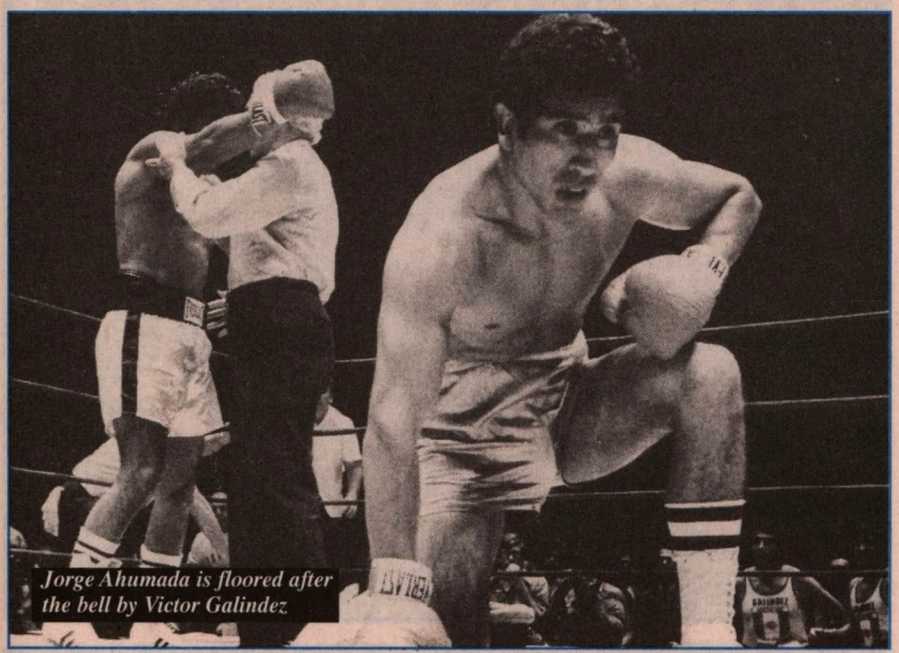
Muhammad Ali. For the second year in a row, and the fourth time in his career, Ali wins the award. In defenses, the heavyweight champ stops Chuck Wepner in 15 and Ron Lyle in 11, decisions Joe Bugner in 15, and, in their third and final bout, halts Joe Frazier after 14 rounds. He improves to 49-2 (35).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

John H. Stracey KO 6 Jose Napoles. Napoles starts well, dropping England's Stracey in the first and bloodying his nose and mouth in the second. Late in the second, however, the champion suffers a cut over his right eye. By the fourth, both of his eyes are badly swollen. In the sixth, with Napoles against the ropes and barely able to fight back, the bout is stopped and Stracey is crowned welterweight champion.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

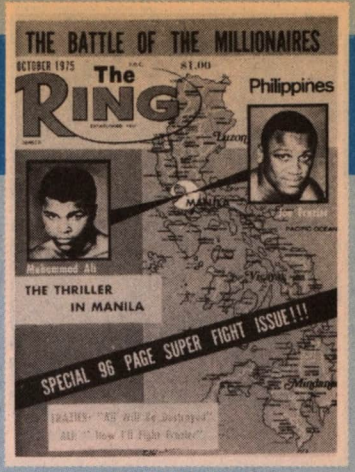
Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier (12). Ready to quit after the 10th, Ali catches Frazier coming in with jabs and right hands, at one point landing nine unanswered punches, including a right to the face that sends "Smokin' Joe's" mouthpiece flying out of the ring. By the end of the round, Frazier has a huge swelling over his left brow and is bleeding badly from his mouth.



Jorge Ahumada is floored after the bell by Victor Galindez

THE BEST FIGHTERS

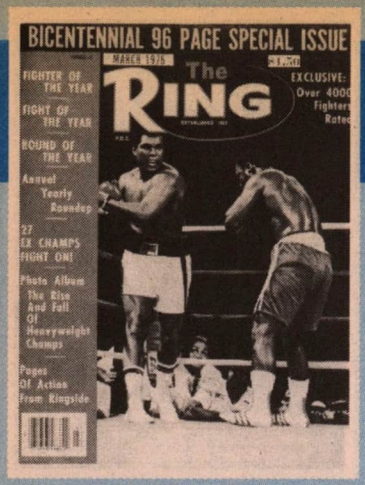
Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Victor Galindez
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Jae Do Yuh
Welterweight: Jose Napoles
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Alfredo Escalera
Featherweight: Alexis Arguello
Bantamweight: Alfonso Zamora
Flyweight: Miguel Canto
Junior Flyweight: Luis Estaba



OCTOBER 1975

It Also Happened

In arguably the greatest fight of all-time, heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali stops Joe Frazier in the 14th round of "The Thrilla In Manila" … England's John H. Stracey batters defending welter champ Jose Napoles into a sixth-round stoppage; Napoles, 35, then retires … Thailand's Saensak Muangsurin wins the WBC super lightweight crown in his third pro fight, stopping Perico Fernandez (KO 8) … Defensive genius Miguel Canto captures the WBC fly title, decisioning Shoji Oguma (W 15) … Franco Udella wins the newly created WBC junior fly title, defeating Valentin Martinez via 12th-round DQ … Puerto Rico's Alfredo Escalera steamrolls Kuniaki Shibata (KO 2) to win the WBC super feather title … Ruben Olivares regains the WBC feather title, crushing Bobby Chacon in two, then loses to Ghana's Poison Kotey (L 15) … Sean O'Grady, 15, and Salvador Sanchez turn pro.



MARCH 1976

1976

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

George Foreman KO 5 Ron Lyle. Fighting for the first time in 15 months, Foreman and Lyle duel in a punchathon at Caesars Palace. Lyle is shaken in the second. He gets through the third, then comes back in the fourth to twice floor Foreman, surviving a knockdown to do it. In the fifth, a weary Foreman has just enough left to drop Lyle for the count.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

George Foreman. Inactive in 1975, Foreman returns to win four bouts, all by knockout. In January, he twice gets off the canvas to kayo Ron Lyle in five. In June, he again stops Joe Frazier, this time in five. Finishing the year with stoppages of Scott Ledoux and Dino Denis, Big George ends at 44-1 (41).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

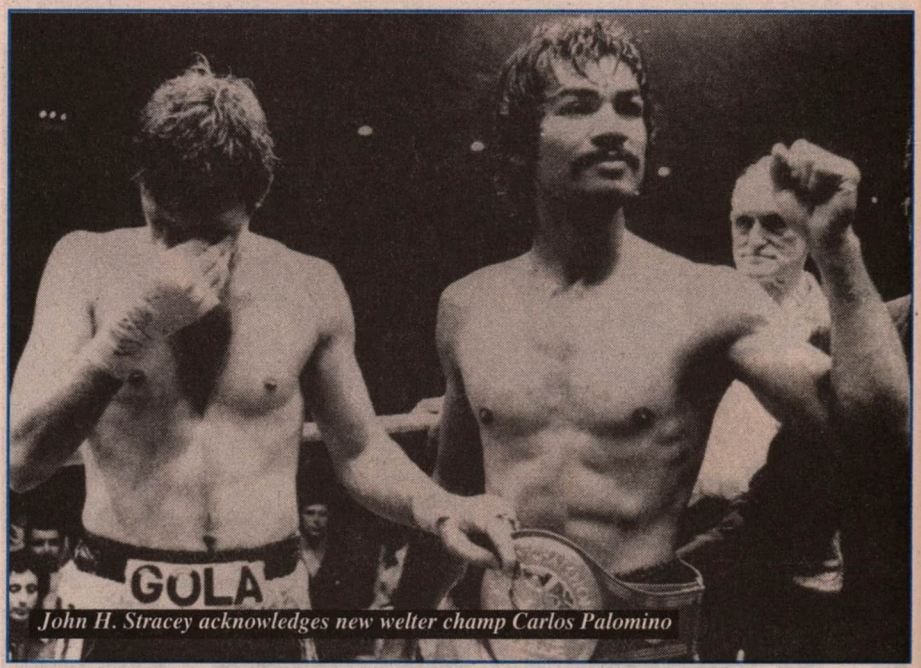
Wilfred Benitez W 15 Antonio Cervantes. The legendary Cervantes, WBA junior welter champ for nearly four years, faces the 25-0 Benitez, just 17 years young. Making his 11th defense, Cervantes can't cope with the challenger's superior jab and hand speed. Winning a split decision, Benitez becomes the youngest champ in boxing history.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

George Foreman-Ron Lyle (4 & 5). Lyle opens round four with a right to the head that drops Foreman to one knee. Big George gets up, then punches Lyle across the ring and floors him underneath the bottom rope. Lyle rallies to drop Foreman just before the bell. In the fifth, Lyle hits Foreman with a right that drives one of his teeth into his gums, cutting his mouth. But Foreman rallies with a barrage that drops Lyle on his face, ending one of the wildest slugfests in division history.

It Also Happened

Muhammad Ali keeps the heavyweight title, edging Ken Norton (W 15) … In a slugfest, George Foreman outlasts Ron Lyle (KO 5) … Carlos Monzon unifies the middleweight title, decisioning Rodrigo Valdes (W 15) … The WBC creates a junior featherweight division … Crowned are feather Danny Lopez (W 15 Poison Kotey) and bantam Carlos Zarate (KO 9 Rodolfo Martinez) … Pipino Cuevas becomes the youngest-ever welter champ, demolishing WBA champ Angel Espada in two, and Carlos Palomino takes the WBC title from John H. Stracey (KO 12) … Wilfred Benitez, 17, becomes the youngest champ in history, outpointing WBA junior welter titlist Antonio Cervantes (W 15) … The USA wins five gold medals at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal … Aaron Pryor and Jeff Chandler turn pro, and Eder Jofre, 40, and Joe Frazier, 32, retire.



John H. Stracey acknowledges new welter champ Carlos Palomino

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Victor Galindez
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Eckhard Dagge
Welterweight: Pipino Cuevas
Junior Welterweight: Wilfred Benitez
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight; Alfredo Escalera
Featherweight: Alexis Arguello
Junior Featherweight: Rigoberto Riasco
Bantamweight: Carlos Zarate
Flyweight: Miguel Canto
Junior Flyweight: Luis Estaba

1977

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jimmy Young W 12 George Foreman. On track for a rematch with Muhammad Ali, Foreman is derailed. Behind early, the former champion sends Young reeling into the ropes with a hook to the jaw early in the seventh, but fails to finish him. Young comes back to dominate, flooring Foreman in the final round en route to a unanimous decision win.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Carlos Zarate. WBC bantamweight champion Zarate scores knockouts over Fernando Cabanela, Danilo Batista, and Juan Rodriguez in defenses. His one non-title fight, however, is his most notable victory. In an eagerly anticipated matchup with WBA champ and fellow unbeaten Alfonso Zamora, Mexico's Zarate knocks out his countryman in four rounds. He improves to 48-0 (47).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Jorge Lujan KO 10 Alfonso Zamora. A 10-1 favorite despite his kayo loss to Carlos Zarate seven months before, Zamora wins the early rounds, hurting Lujan in the second and third. When he tires, Lujan opens up with both hands. By the eighth, Zamora, his eyes swollen, is exhausted. In the 10th, the slick Panamanian drops him with a right to the chin for the count.

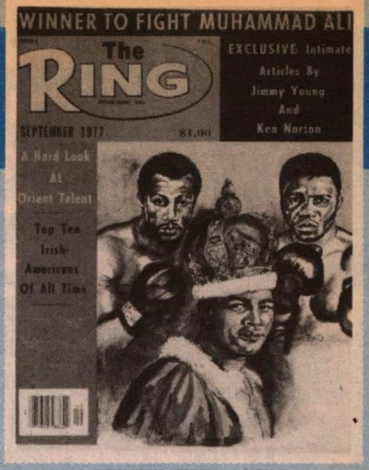
ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jimmy Young-George Foreman (12). Going into the final round, Foreman, well behind, needs a knockout. But he's exhausted and dehydrated. Hardly a big puncher, Young has enough left to drop the weary Foreman to his hands and knees, giving the underdog an upset victory and sending Big George into a 10-year retirement.

Rodrigo Valdes (left) rumbles with Carlos Monzon

THE BEST FIGHTERS

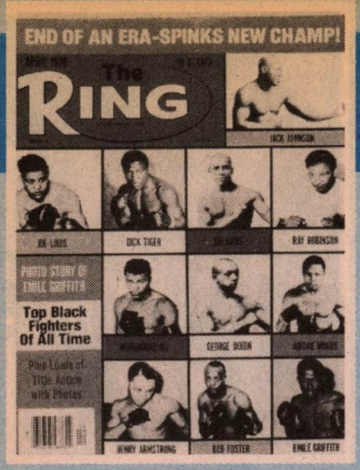
Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Victor Galindez
Middleweight: Carlos Monzon
Junior Middleweight: Eddie Gazo
Welterweight: Carlos Palomino
Junior Welterweight: Saensak Muangsurin
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Alfredo Escalera
Featherweight: Danny Lopez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Carlos Zarate
Flyweight: Miguel Canto
Junior Flyweight: Yoko Gushiken



SEPTEMBER 1977

It Also Happened

Heavyweight king Muhammad Ali barely survives Earnie Shavers (W 15) … George Foreman is outpointed by Jimmy Young (L 12); he won't fight again for 10 years … In a non-title bantam showdown, WBC champ Carlos Zarate outslugs WBA king Alfonso Zamora (KO 4); a 10-1 underdog, Jorge Lujan subsequently dethrones Zamora (KO 10) … Middleweight champ Carlos Monzon, 35, rises from the floor to outpoint Rodrigo Valdes (W 15) and then retires; Valdes wins the vacant title, outpointing Bennie Briscoe (W 15) … Puerto Rican powerpuncher Wilfredo Gomez begins his record reign at junior feather, winning the WBC title by stopping Dong Kyun Yum in 12 … Michael Spinks, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Thomas Hearns turn pro, and Emile Griffith, 39, retires.



APRIL 1978

1978

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Leon Spinks W 15 Muhammad Ali. Spinks, the 1976 Olympic light heavyweight champion, gives an inspired performance, scoring against an Ali who is content to coast in the early rounds. His face swollen, "The Greatest" comes on in the middle rounds, but Spinks has more left at the end, outscoring the champion in a desperate final round and winning a split decision and the heavyweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Muhammad Ali. In February, Ali loses the heavyweight title by split decision to novice Leon Spinks. Seven months later, "The Greatest," 36, shows he still has enough left to give Spinks a boxing lesson. The 15-round unanimous decision gives Ali the heavyweight title for an unprecedented third time and he improves to 58-3 (37).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Leon Spinks W 15 Muhammad Ali. With only seven pro fights to Ali's 59, Spinks is an 8-1 underdog. Choosing not to take Spinks seriously, Ali rope-a-dopes in the early rounds, waiting for the challenger to tire. It doesn't happen. Despite never having gone more than 10 rounds, Spinks is energized at the finish, winning the decision and the heavyweight title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Leon Spinks-Muhammad Ali (15). Ahead on two of the three cards, Spinks only has to finish the bout to get his hand raised. Ali desperately tries for a knockout, at one point sending the challenger reeling from a right to the head. But "Neon Leon" rebounds to bull Ali against the ropes, catching him with a solid left-right to the head as the fight ends.

It Also Happened

Roberto Duran stops arch-rival Esteban DeJesus (KO 12), then vacates the lightweight title after making a division-record 12 defenses … In a shocker, Olympic gold medalist Leon Spinks, a novice of seven pro bouts, dethrones heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali (W 15). Ali wins the title for a record third time in the rematch (W 15), then retires; Larry Holmes takes the WBC crown, edging Ken Norton by 15-round verdict … Hugo Corro wins the middleweight title, decisioning Rodrigo Valdes (W 15) … Alexis Arguello wins his second title, dethroning WBC super feather king Alfredo Escalera (KO 13) … Eusebio Pedroza begins a record reign at featherweight, winning the WBA title from Cecilio Lastra (KO 13) … Mike Rossman takes the WBA light heavy title from Victor Galindez (KO 13) … Dwight Braxton turns pro and Bob Foster, 39, retires.

Ken Norton and Larry Holmes waged a war to remember

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Light Heavyweight: Victor Galindez
Middleweight: Hugo Corro
Junior Middleweight: Rocky Mattioli
Welterweight: Pipino Cuevas
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Featherweight: Danny Lopez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Carlos Zarate
Flyweight: Miguel Canto
Junior Flyweight: Yoko Gushiken

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The exciting followup to Great One-Punch Knockouts. If you like knockout action, this video is a must for your collection. You'll see these fantastic one-punch knockouts and many more: Ali-Liston II, Louis-Braddock, Robinson-Fullmer, Patterson-Johansson II, Louis-Paycheck. **33 minutes.**

RINGSIDE WITH MIKE TYSON

Mike Tyson puts it all together in a colorful canvas that covers the main events, the controversies, the upsets, the multimillion-dollar gates, the records, and the comebacks. Footage includes Sonny Liston, Jake LaMotta, Ray Robinson, Ray Leonard, and much more. **44 minutes.**

THE MIDDLEWEIGHTS

The most skillful and devastating middleweights in the history of boxing are profiled in this fast-moving video. Watch stellar performances by Stanley Ketchel, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Marcel Cerdan. Also includes Rocky Graziano, Jake LaMotta, Carlos Monzon, and many others. Hosted by Curt Gowdy and Floyd Patterson. **58 minutes.**

BOXING'S GREATEST CHAMPIONS

Match wits with the Boxing Writers of America as they choose the best fighter of all-time from each division and then debate who deserves the title of the Greatest Fighter of All-Time. Includes explosive fight footage of Henry Armstrong, Benny Leonard, and Roberto Duran in the lightweight division; welterweights Barney Ross, Henry Armstrong, and Ray Robinson; middleweights Mickey Walker, Carlos Monzon, and Ray Robinson; light heavyweights Bob Fitzsimmons, Billy Conn, and Archie Moore; heavyweights Muhammad Ali, Rocky Marciano, and Joe Louis. **60 minutes.**

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS: "THE BIG PUNCHERS"

The biggest draw in sports today is the heavyweight knockout artist. This hard-hitting video explores boxing's most famous punchers. A sample of the action included in this video are clips of Dempsey's savage victory over Willard, the second Louis-Schmeling fight, Marciano vs. Walcott, and Frazier vs. Ali. **59 minutes.**

GREAT ONE-PUNCH KNOCKOUTS

You've got a ringside seat for a heart-stopping lineup of boxing's most exciting knockouts, including Muhammad Ali-George Foreman, Ezzard Charles-Joe Walcott, Jim Corbett-Bob Fitzsimmons, Rocky Marciano-Joe Walcott, Sugar Ray Robinson-Rocky Graziano, and many more. **30 minutes.**

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS: THE STYLISTS

Host Curt Gowdy highlights the careers of the sport's finest boxers. Beginning with Jim Corbett, you'll see challengers throughout history battle in some of the most striking film coverage ever assembled. Jack Johnson displays exquisite defensive skills, Floyd Patterson shows off his peek-a-boo style, Gene Tunney demonstrates the scientific approach to boxing, and Muhammad Ali exhibits the skills that made him "The Greatest," plus Walcott, Charles, and Louis: **57 minutes.**

TYSON AND THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Join Mike Tyson as he takes a tour through the history of the heavyweight division. Tyson adds his own insight as he analyzes the styles and lives of the men who wore the heavyweight crown before him. This fantastic video includes rare footage of Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Muhammad Ali, and, of course, Tyson himself. **51 minutes.**

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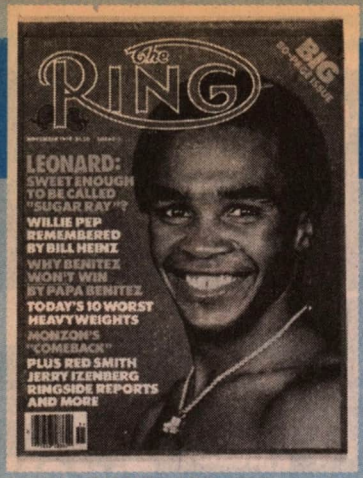
1979



NOVEMBER 1979

It Also Happened

Larry Holmes keeps the WBC heavyweight title in thrillers against Mike Weaver (KO 12) and Earnie Shavers (KO 11) … The WBC creates a cruiserweight division … In a thriller, Matthew (Saad Muhammad) Franklin wins the WBC light heavy title, halting Marvin Johnson in eight; later in the year, he defends against John Conteh (W 15) … Wilfred Benitez wins his third title, dethroning WBC welter champ Carlos Palomino (W 15), then loses the belt to Sugar Ray Leonard (KO by 15) … Jim Watt (WBC) and Ernesto Espana (WBA) win the vacant lightweight titles … In his 11th pro bout, Chan Hee Park takes the WBC fly title from Miguel Canto (W 15); it is Canto's 15th defense … Vito Antuofermo captures the middleweight title, outpointing Hugo Corro (W 15) … Lupe Pintor dethrones WBC bantam champ Carlos Zarate by controversial 15-round verdict; Zarate doesn't fight again for 5½ years … Azumah Nelson and Ray Mancini turn pro.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Danny Lopez KO 15 Mike Ayala. Challenging WBC featherweight champion Lopez, Ayala leads after six rounds. In the seventh, Lopez floors the challenger, but Ayala rallies. In the 11th, he is again downed and apparently counted out, but when the timekeeper complains of a mix-up with the referee's count, the bout is resumed. In the 15th, the champion drops Ayala with a hook. This time, the fight is over.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

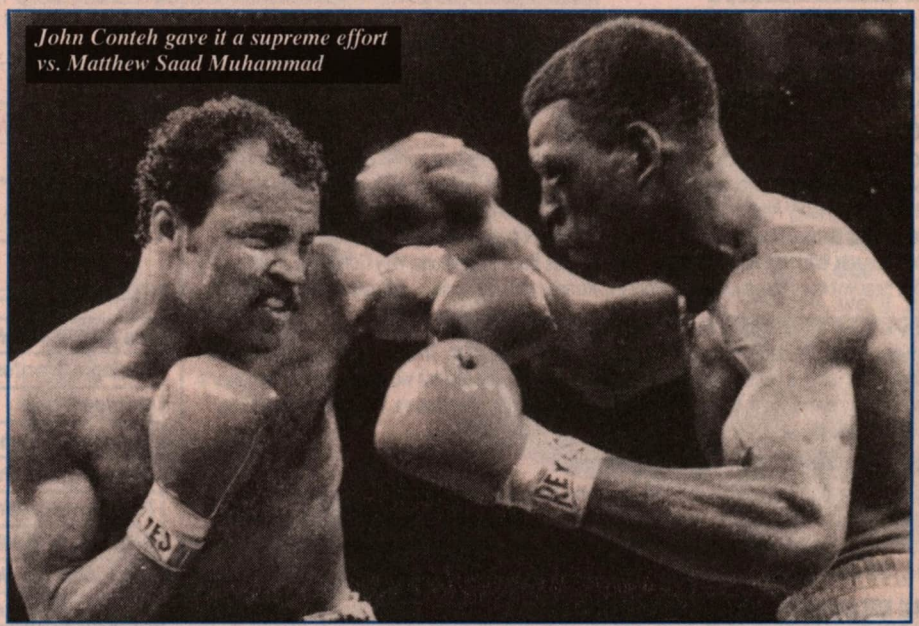
Sugar Ray Leonard. The 1976 Olympic light welterweight gold medalist, Leonard wins all nine of his bouts, including a 10-round decision over Adolfo Viruet and knockouts of veterans Johnny Gant, Pete Ranzany, and Andy Price. In November, Sugar Ray stops Wilfred Benitez in 15 to win the WBC welter title. He finishes the year at 26-0 (17).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Vito Antuofermo D 15 Marvin Hagler. Middleweight champ Antuofermo is a 4-1 underdog to Hagler, who has waited three years for his shot. After 10 rounds, Hagler appears to be a sure winner, but Antuofermo, cut over both eyes, rallies, shaking the southpaw in the 12th and cutting him over the right eye. After a final round that sees Antuofermo, blood running down his face, trading evenly with Hagler, the bout is called a draw.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Matthew Franklin-Marvin Johnson (8). Franklin opens the eighth round behind on points to WBC light heavyweight champion Marvin Johnson. Cut badly over both eyes, he unleashes a two-fisted barrage, ending with a tremendous right to the jaw that floors Johnson. When the champion arises, he is still hurt, and the bout is halted. Franklin subsequently changes his name to Matthew Saad Muhammad.



John Conteh gave it a supreme effort vs. Matthew Saad Muhammad

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: Mate Parlov
Light Heavyweight: Matthew Franklin
Middleweight: Vito Antuofermo
Junior Middleweight: Ayub Kalule
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Leonard
Junior Welterweight: Antonio Cervantes
Lightweight: Jim Watt
Junior Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Featherweight: Danny Lopez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Lupe Pintor
Flyweight: Chan Hee Park
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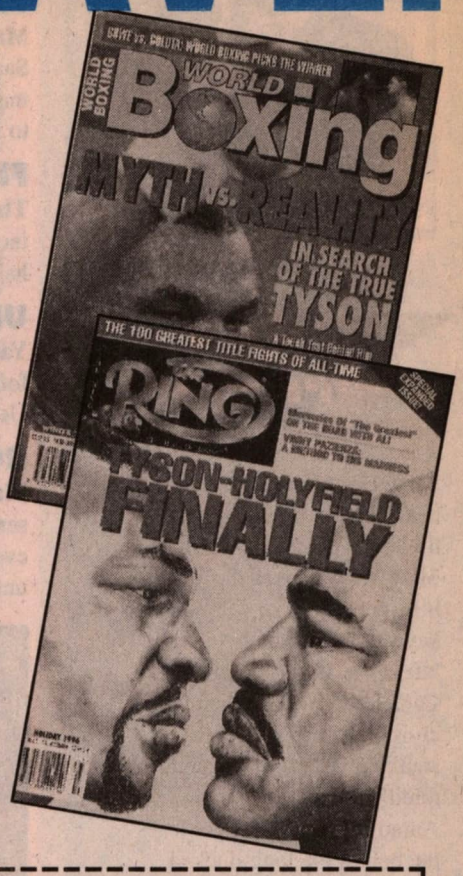

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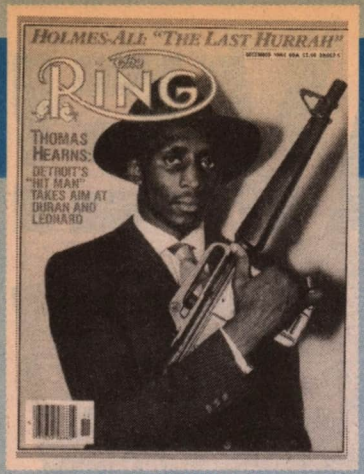


DECEMBER 1980

1980

It Also Happened

Larry Holmes retains the WBC heavyweight title, stopping a lifeless Muhammad Ali in 11; Mike Weaver wins the WBA title, coming from behind to kayo John Tate with 45 seconds left in the 15th … Marvin Camel becomes the first world cruiser champ … British southpaw Alan Minter dethrones middleweight titlist Vito Antuofermo (W 15), but loses the belt to the long-ducked Marvin Hagler (KO by 3) … Unheralded Mexican Salvador Sanchez captures the WBC feather crown, stopping Danny Lopez (KO 13); Lopez, 27, retires after losing the rematch … Roberto Duran takes Sugar Ray Leonard's WBC welter title (W 15), then says "no mas" in the rematch (KO by 8) … Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns crushes WBA welter champ Pipino Cuevas in two … Aaron Pryor rises from the floor to unseat legendary WBA junior welter champ Antonio Cervantes (KO 4) … Philly's Jeff Chandler is crowned WBA bantam king, halting Julian Solis in 14 … Donald Curry, Milton McCrory, Julio Cesar Chavez, Khaosai Galaxy, and Hector Camacho turn pro … Victor Galindez, 31, dies in an auto racing accident.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Matthew Saad Muhammad KO 14 Yaqui Lopez. A rematch of their 1978 war, in which Saad stopped Lopez in 11. This time, the WBC light heavy crown is at stake, with Lopez making his fourth title try. Behind early and nearly finished in the eighth, Saad roars back to floor his foe four times in the 14th.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

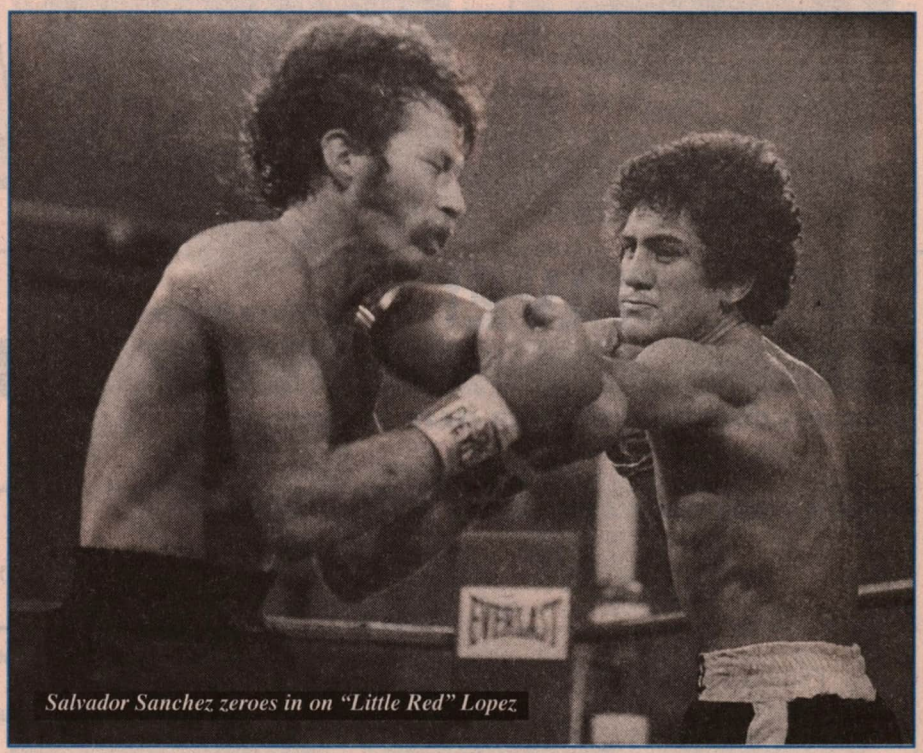
Thomas Hearns. The 22-year-old "Hit Man" wins all six of his bouts by knockout, including a second-round demolition of Pipino Cuevas to win the WBA welter title. After halting Luis Primera in six, Hearns finishes at 30-0 (28).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Yasutsune Uehara KO 6 Samuel Serrano. WBA junior lightweight champion for nearly four years, Serrano easily wins the first five rounds. Late in the sixth, however, "Flipper" Uehara flattens him for the count with a single right to the chin.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Matthew Saad Muhammad-Yaqui Lopez (8). Lopez staggers Saad with a hook that sends him reeling into the ropes, then unloads a savage barrage. The champion takes everything Lopez can dish out before fighting his way off the ropes and trading evenly until the bell.



Salvador Sanchez zeroes in on "Little Red" Lopez

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: Marvin Camel
Light Heavyweight: Matthew Saad Muhammad
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Ayub Kalule
Welterweight: Thomas Hearns
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Hilmer Kenty
Junior Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Featherweight: Salvador Sanchez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Lupe Pintor
Junior Bantamweight: Rafael Orono
Flyweight: Shoji Oguma
Junior Flyweight: Hilario Zapata

1981

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Leonard KO 14 Thomas Hearns. In a welterweight unification showdown, WBC champion Leonard, behind after five rounds, comes back to hurt WBA titlist Hearns in the sixth and seventh. Hearns rallies to nearly close Sugar Ray's left eye, but Leonard puts "The Hit Man" through the ropes in the 13th, and punishes him in the 14th until the bout is stopped.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

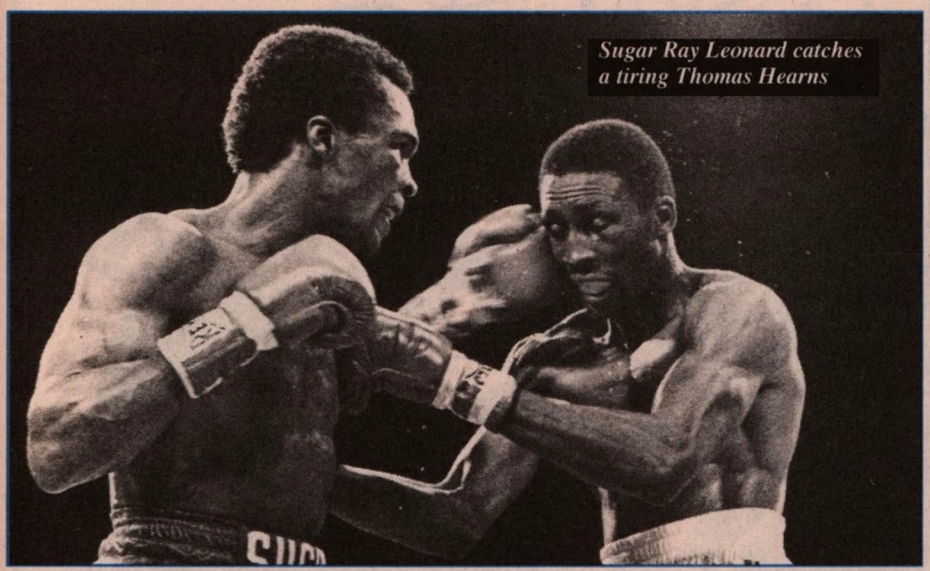
Sugar Ray Leonard & Salvador Sanchez. After beginning the year with a 10th-round stoppage of Larry Bonds, WBC welter titlist Leonard halts previously unbeaten WBA junior middle champ Ayub Kalule in nine. The capper, however, is his come-from-behind stoppage of Thomas Hearns in unification of the world welterweight title. Sanchez sandwiches WBC featherweight title defenses vs. Roberto Castanon and Pat Cowdell around an eighth-round stoppage of previously undefeated WBC super bantam champ Wilfredo Gomez.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Roger Stafford W 10 Pipino Cuevas. Coming back after his knockout loss to Thomas Hearns in 1980, Cuevas begins the year with quick kayos of Benny Prada and Jorgen Hansen. Stafford, however, has a different fate in mind, flooring the Mexican in the second, then surviving Cuevas' big hooks in the fourth en route to a unanimous decision victory.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

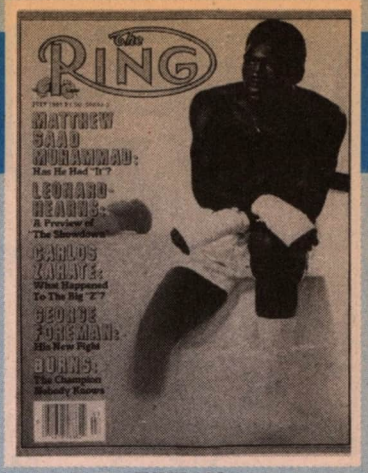
Caveman Lee-John LoCicero (5). In their July brawl in Detroit, Lee, out on his feet at the end of round four, floors LoCicero with a right-left to the head early in the fifth. The New York middleweight barely arises in time, then somehow unloads a barrage that has Lee seemingly finished. Suddenly, the Caveman lands a hook to the jaw that drops LoCicero for the count.



Sugar Ray Leonard catches a tiring Thomas Hearns

THE BEST FIGHTERS

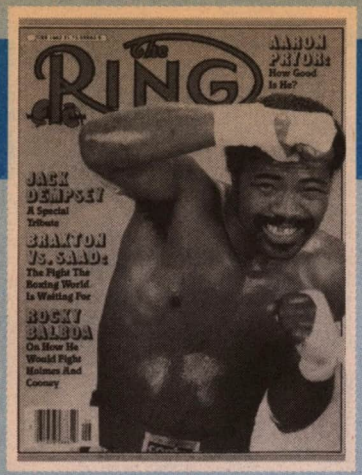
Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: Carlos DeLeon
Light Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Wilfred Benitez
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Leonard
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Junior Lightweight: Rolando Navarette
Featherweight: Salvador Sanchez
Junior Featherweight: Sergio Palma
Bantamweight: Jeff Chandler
Junior Bantamweight: Chul Ho Kim
Flyweight: Antonio Avelar
Junior Flyweight: Hilario Zapata



JULY 1981

It Also Happened

Sugar Ray Leonard takes the WBA junior middle crown (KO 9 Ayub Kalule), then unifies the welter title, halting Thomas Hearns in 14 ... WBC feather champ Salvador Sanchez rejects the challenge of previously unbeaten pound-for-pound claimant and junior feather king Wilfredo Gomez (KO 8) ... Wilfred Benitez becomes a triple-crown titlist, kayoing WBC super welter champ Mo Hope with one punch (KO 12) ... Alexis Arguello also wins his third title, capturing the WBC lightweight belt from Jim Watt (W 15); Sean O'Grady wins the WBA title, outpointing Hilmer Kenty (W 15) ... Dwight (Muhammad Qawi) Braxton unseats WBC light heavy king Matthew Saad Muhammad (KO 10), and Michael Spinks dethrones WBA champ Eddie Mustafa Muhammad (W 15) ... Gerry Cooney becomes the top-ranked heavyweight contender ... Joe Frazier, 37, makes a one-fight comeback, struggling to a 10-round draw with Jumbo Cummings ... Mike McCallum turns pro.



JUNE 1982

1982

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Bobby Chacon W 15 Bazooka Limon. In this, their fourth and final meeting, Limon floors Chacon in the third and 10th rounds and leads after 12. Chacon, keeping a promise he had made to his wife (a recent suicide victim), rallies to hurt Limon before flooring him late in the 15th. The knockdown turns out to be the difference, with Chacon winning a close decision and the WBC super feather title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Larry Holmes. WBC heavyweight champ since 1978, and long-recognized as the best fighter in the division, Holmes cements top honors with his 13th-round stoppage of dangerous Gerry Cooney. Holmes finishes the year with a lopsided 15-round decision over Tex Cobb, advancing to 41-0 (30).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

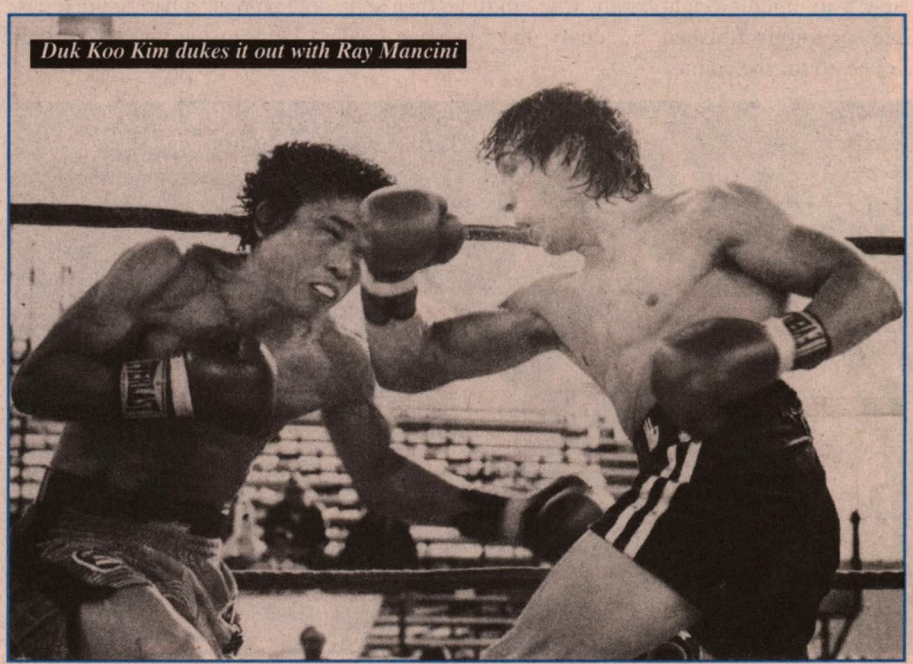
Kirkland Laing W 10 Roberto Duran. Twice a knockout loser to Colin Jones, Laing overcomes a shaky start to embarrass the one-time "Hands Of Stone," scoring almost at will in the late rounds for a split decision that all but eliminates Duran from further title contention.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Wilfredo Gomez-Lupe Pintor (3). In a matchup of champs, WBC super bantamweight king Gomez bulls WBC bantam boss Pintor into the ropes and displays the firepower that has given him 37 kayos in 39 fights. Pintor, however, fires back with equal intensity, and the two wage war until a battered Gomez finally halts the Mexican in the 14th.

It Also Happened

WBC champ Larry Holmes stops heavily hyped number-one contender Gerry Cooney in 13 … In a battle of legends, WBC super welter champ Wilfred Benitez dominates Roberto Duran (W 15); Benitez then loses the title to Thomas Hearns (L 15) … In the Fight of the Decade, WBA junior welter titlist Aaron Pryor outlasts Alexis Arguello (KO 14) … In a sensational battle of champs, WBC super bantam king Wilfredo Gomez guns down bantam boss Lupe Pintor (KO 14) … Boom Boom Mancini wins the WBA lightweight crown, halting Art Frias in one; in his second defense, Mancini stops Duk Koo Kim (KO 14), who dies from head injuries suffered in the bout … After only nine pro bouts, Davey Moore wins the WBA junior middle crown, kayoing Tadashi Mihara in six … Seven years after losing the feather title, Bobby Chacon wins the WBC super feather crown, outpointing Bazooka Limon (W 15) … Six months after undergoing retinal surgery, Sugar Ray Leonard, 26, retires, as does Miguel Canto, 34 … WBC feather champ Salvador Sanchez, 23, dies in a car accident.



Duk Koo Kim dukes it out with Ray Mancini

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: ST Gordon
Light Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Wilfred Benitez
Welterweight: Sugar Ray Leonard
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Junior Lightweight: Bazooka Limon
Featherweight: Salvador Sanchez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Jeff Chandler
Junior Bantamweight: Jiro Watanabe
Flyweight: Santos Laciar
Junior Flyweight: Hilario Zapata

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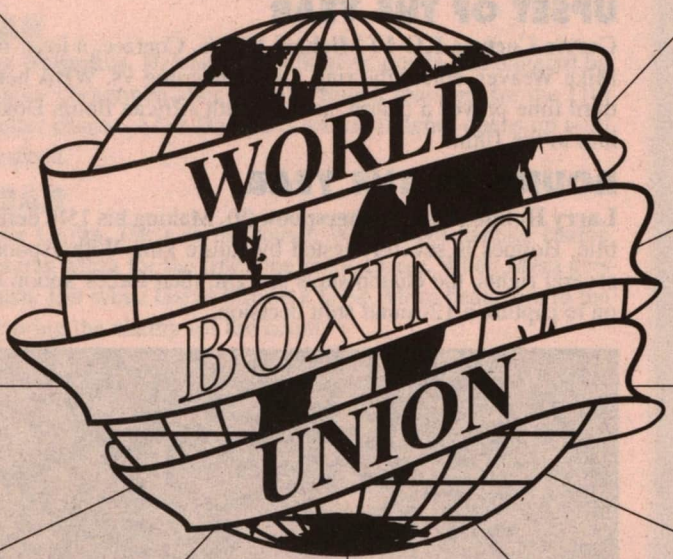

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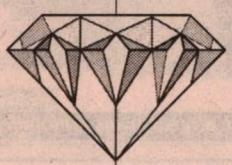

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APRIL 1983

1983

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Bobby Chacon W 15 Cornelius Boza-Edwards. In a rematch of the 1981 WBC super feather title fight won by Boza, Chacon floors the southpaw in the first and second, then overcomes a knockdown in the third and cuts over both eyes to drop his rival in the 12th en route to a close but unanimous decision win.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Marvin Hagler. Undisputed middleweight champ since 1980, Hagler knocks out Tony Sibson in six and Wilford Scypion in four. He then finishes the year with a 15-round decision over the rejuvenated Roberto Duran to advance to 58-2-2 (48), and further establish his reputation as the best fighter, pound-for-pound, in the world.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Gerrie Coetzee KO 10 Michael Dokes. Coetzee, a loser in title fights to John Tate and Mike Weaver, enters the ring a 4-1 underdog vs. WBA heavyweight champ Dokes. His third time proves a charm, as the South African floors Dokes in the fifth before kayoing him in the 10th.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Larry Holmes-Tim Witherspoon (9). Making his 15th defense of the WBC heavyweight title, Holmes is severely tested by future king Witherspoon. Rocked by two hooks and several rights, the champ stays upright, then forces Spoon back with big rights. He goes on to capture a 12-round split decision.

Corny Boza-Edwards traps a bloodied Bobby Chacon

It Also Happened

Michael Spinks unifies the light heavy title, outpointing Dwight (Muhammad Qawi) Braxton (W 15) … The vacant welter titles are filled by Donald Curry (WBA) and Milton McCrory (WBC) … Roger Mayweather wins the WBA junior lightweight crown, dumping long-reigning Sammy Serrano (KO 8); Hector Camacho takes the WBC title, halting Bazooka Limon (KO 5) … Roberto Duran completes an incredible turnaround, winning his third title by halting WBA junior middle king Davey Moore in eight; the Panamanian narrowly fails, however, in his challenge of middleweight boss Marvin Hagler (L 15) … Edwin Rosario, 20, wins the vacant WBC lightweight crown, outlasting Jose Luis Ramirez (W 12) … Kiko Bejines, 20, dies from head injuries suffered in his battle for the vacant WBC bantam title vs. Albert Davila (KO by 12) … The WBC reduces its title fights from 15 to 12 rounds.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: Carlos DeLeon
Light Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Roberto Duran
Welterweight: Donald Curry
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Edwin Rosario
Junior Lightweight: Hector Camacho
Featherweight: Eusebio Pedroza
Junior Featherweight: Jaime Garza
Bantamweight: Jeff Chandler
Junior Bantamweight: Jiro Watanabe
Flyweight: Santos Laciar
Junior Flyweight: Jung Koo Chang

1984

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jose Luis Ramirez KO 4 Edwin Rosario. Rosario, who barely decisioned Ramirez for the vacant WBC lightweight title 18 months before, floors the Mexican southpaw in the first and second rounds. Seemingly finished, Ramirez hurts Rosario with a tremendous left to the jaw in the third, then unloads late in the fourth, leaving the champion helpless along the ropes and bringing the referee's intervention.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

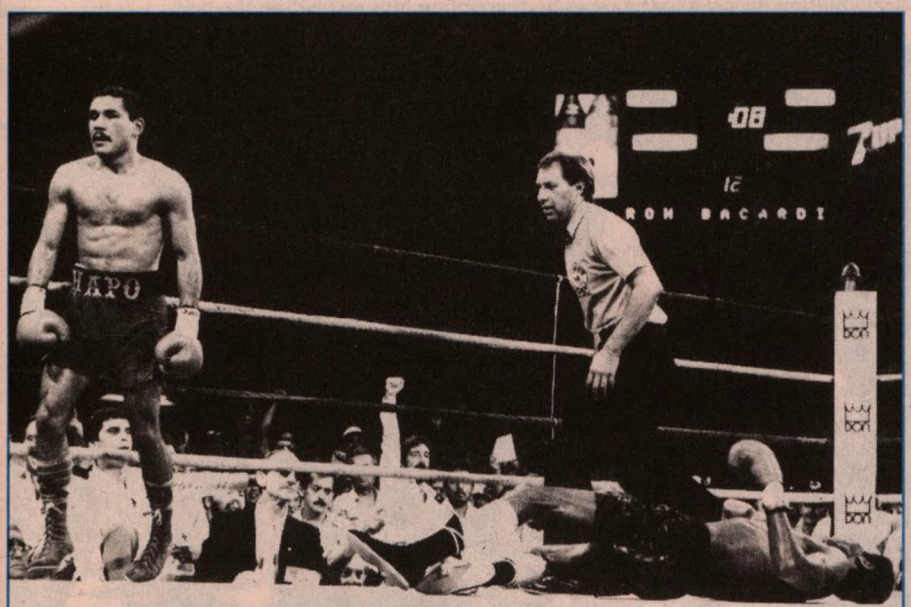
Thomas Hearns. Sidelined for much of 1983 with a broken right hand, WBC super welter champ Hearns, after a 12-round decision over Luigi Minchillo, regains his "Hit Man" status with a devastating second-round knockout of Roberto Duran. Hearns, 40-1 (34), also halts Fred Hutchings in three.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Gene Hatcher KO 11 Johnny Bumphus. Hatcher, far behind on points and angered by an altercation involving Bumphus' cornermen after the 10th round, roars out for the 11th and floors the WBA junior welter champ. After Bumphus arises, Hatcher opens up with both hands until the bout is stopped.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

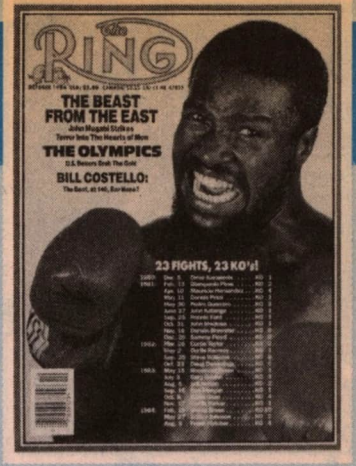
Juan (Kid) Meza KO 1 Jaime Garza. Early in the round, WBC super bantam champ Garza, 40-0 (38), floors the veteran Meza for the first time in his career. When Meza gets up, Garza moves in for the finish. But when Garza throws a hook, Meza beats him to the punch with one of his own, flooring the champ for the count.



Edwin Rosario saves the title by flooring Howard Davis Jr.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

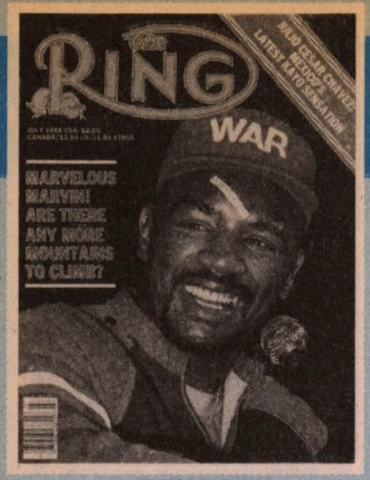
Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Cruiserweight: Carlos DeLeon
Light Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Super Middleweight: Chong Pal Park
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Thomas Hearns
Welterweight: Donald Curry
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Edwin Rosario
Junior Lightweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Junior Featherweight: Victor Callejas
Bantamweight: Richard Sandoval
Junior Bantamweight: Jiro Watanabe
Flyweight: Santos Laciar
Junior Flyweight: Jung Koo Chang



OCTOBER 1984

It Also Happened

Larry Holmes gives up the WBC heavyweight title, but is instantly recognized by the fledgling IBF … Rocky Lockridge wins the WBA junior light title with a one-punch, first-round kayo of Roger Mayweather … Wilfredo Gomez wins his second title, dethroning WBC feather king Juan LaPorte (W 12); Azumah Nelson then dumps Gomez (KO 11) … WBC super welter champ Thomas Hearns crushes Roberto Duran in two … Livingstone Bramble ends the WBA lightweight reign of Ray Mancini (KO 14) … Richard Sandoval takes the WBA bantam title from Jeff Chandler (KO 15); Chandler, 27, never fights again … An underdog, Julio Cesar Chavez wins the vacant WBC super feather crown, halting Mario Martinez in eight … The IBF creates the super middleweight division … Jeff Fenech and Chiquita Gonzalez turn pro, as do U.S. Olympians Mark Breland, Tyrell Biggs, Evander Holyfield, Pernell Whitaker, Meldrick Taylor, and Virgil Hill, on the same card at Madison Square Garden.



JULY 1985

1985

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Marvin Hagler KO 3 Thomas Hearns. In one of the fights of the decade, Hagler and Hearns exceed all expectations during their clash at Caesars Palace. Hearns shakes Hagler and cuts him over his right eye in the first, but the southpaw bulls through "The Hit Man's" dynamite and, ignoring the blood covering his face, finishes the challenger with a right to the jaw in the third.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Marvin Hagler & Donald Curry. Hagler leaves no doubt to his claim as one of the greatest middleweight champs ever, stopping Thomas Hearns in the third round of one of the most explosive slugfests in ring history. Curry, already WBA and IBF welterweight champion, stops Colin Jones in four, then unifies the title by flattening WBC champ Milton McCrory in two.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

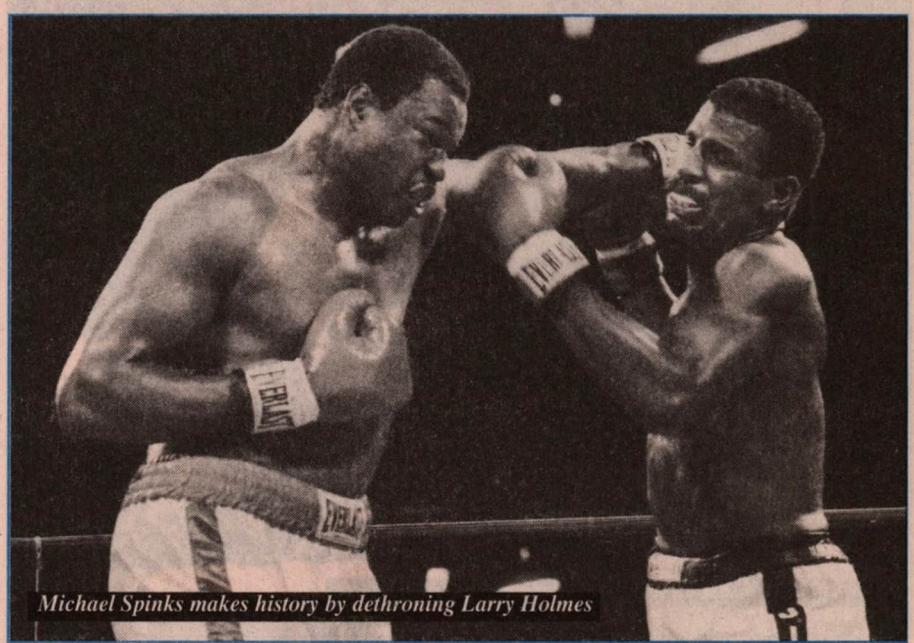
Michael Spinks W 15 Larry Holmes. Holmes, 48-0, and champion for seven years, defends against 175-pound champ Spinks. Moving in and out and confusing his bigger foe, Spinks scores frequently with jabs and rights to the face, winning a unanimous decision and becoming the first light heavy titlist to defeat a reigning heavyweight champ.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns (1). In one of the greatest opening rounds in history, Hagler and Hearns fire bombs from the start. Hearns hurts Hagler early with big rights, but the latter, absorbing blows that would have finished any other middleweight, fires back, bulling his rival to the ropes and wobbling him just before the bell.

It Also Happened

In a savage war, middleweight champ Marvin Hagler guns down Thomas Hearns in three … A 6-1 underdog, Michael Spinks takes the IBF heavyweight crown from Larry Holmes (W 15); it is the first time a light heavy champ has dethroned a heavyweight king … Awesome Aussie Jeff Fenech wins his first title, stopping IBF bantam boss Satoshi Shingaki in nine … Donald Curry unifies the welter title by demolishing Milton McCrory in two … Wilfredo Gomez becomes a triple-crown champ, dethroning WBA junior lightweight titlist Rocky Lockridge by disputed 15-round decision … Irish eyes are smiling as fan favorite Barry McGuigan ends the lengthy reign of WBA feather champ Eusebio Pedroza (W 15) … Colombia's masterful Miguel Lora is crowned WBC bantam champ after outpointing Daniel Zaragoza (W 12) … Dwight Muhammad Qawi becomes a two-division champ by stopping WBA cruiser king Piet Crous (KO 11) … Mike Tyson, 18, turns pro.



Michael Spinks makes history by dethroning Larry Holmes

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Cruiserweight: Dwight Muhammad Qawi
Light Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Super Middleweight: Chong Pal Park
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Mike McCallum
Welterweight: Donald Curry
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Jimmy Paul
Junior Lightweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Featherweight: Barry McGuigan
Junior Featherweight: Victor Callejas
Bantamweight: Miguel Lora
Junior Bantamweight: Jiro Watanabe
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada
Junior Flyweight: Jung Koo Chang

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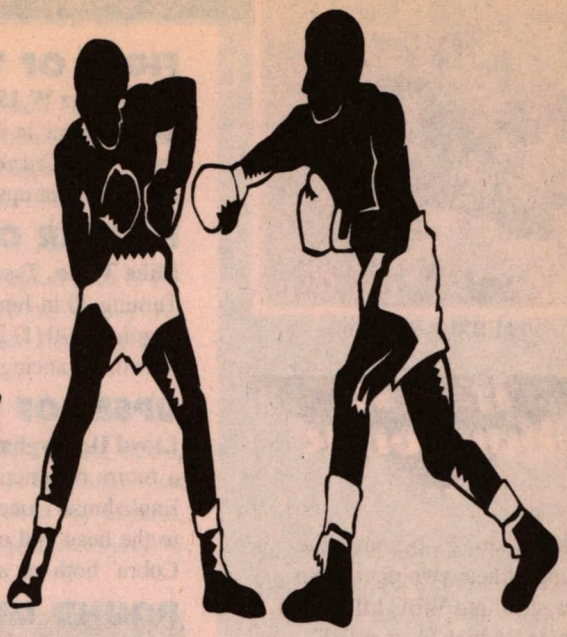

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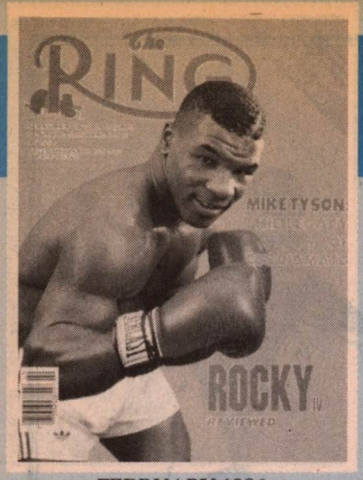


FEBRUARY 1986

1986

It Also Happened

Mike Tyson, 20, becomes the youngest heavyweight champ ever, crushing WBC titlist Trevor Berbick in two; IBF champ Michael Spinks repeats his win over Larry Holmes, this time by controversial 15-round decision … Marvin Johnson becomes a three-time light heavy king, dumping WBA champ Leslie Stewart in seven … England's Lloyd Honeyghan wins the unified welter title, surprising Donald Curry by seventh-round stoppage … After losing a close 12-round decision to WBC lightweight boss Hector Camacho, Edwin Rosario captures the WBA belt, blowing out Livingstone Bramble in two … In one of the last of the grueling 15-round wars, Evander Holyfield, engaging in only his 11th pro bout, takes the WBA junior heavyweight (cruiserweight) crown from Dwight Muhammad Qawi … In a shocker, Steve Cruz wins the WBA feather title, decisioning a dehydrated Barry McGuigan over 15 rounds … Terry Norris turns pro … After a seven-year absence, Carlos Zarate, 35, begins a comeback.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Steve Cruz W 15 Barry McGuigan. Irish hero McGuigan's American coming-out party has a crasher in Cruz, a late sub for Fernando Sosa. McGuigan wins most of the early rounds, but Cruz drops him in the 10th, then floors the dehydrated champ twice in the 15th en route to an upset decision victory and the WBA featherweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

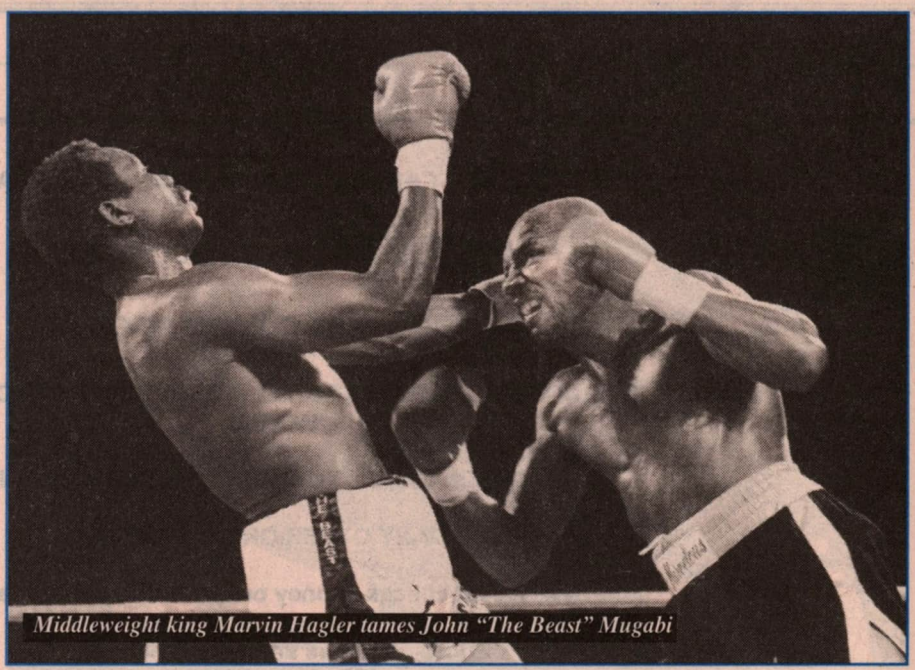
Mike Tyson. Tyson's blitzkrieg through the heavyweight division is the story of the year. Turning 20 in June, he easily disposes of Jesse Ferguson, Jose Ribalta, and Marvis Frazier in going 13-0 (11 by kayo). In November, "Iron Mike" stops WBC champion Trevor Berbick in two, advancing to 28-0 (26), and becoming the youngest heavyweight champ ever.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Lloyd Honeyghan KO 6 Donald Curry. World welterweight champ Curry, mentioned as a future opponent for middleweight titlist Marvin Hagler, defends against little-known Englishman Honeyghan. A 7-1 underdog, the challenger repeatedly stuns Curry with rights to the head and opens a deep cut over his opponent's right eye, costing "The Lone Star Cobra" both his unbeaten record and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Steve Cruz-Barry McGuigan (15). Despite having been down in the 10th, all 5-2 favorite McGuigan has to do is stay on his feet to remain WBA feather champ. He can't do it, however, with the 110-degree heat and Cruz' punches combining to produce two more knockdowns and a decision loss.



Middleweight king Marvin Hagler tames John "The Beast" Mugabi

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Mike Tyson
Cruiserweight: Evander Holyfield
Light Heavyweight: Marvin Johnson
Super Middleweight: Chong Pal Park
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Mike McCallum
Welterweight: Lloyd Honeyghan
Junior Welterweight: Tsuyoshi Hamada
Lightweight: Hector Camacho
Junior Lightweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Featherweight: Azumah Nelson
Junior Featherweight: Samart Payakarun
Bantamweight: Miguel Lora
Junior Bantamweight: Gilberto Roman
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada
Junior Flyweight: Jung Koo Chang

1987

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler. Inactive since 1984, Leonard is a decided underdog to long-reigning middleweight champ Hagler, who has kayoed Thomas Hearns and John Mugabi in his last two bouts. Firing in flurries, then getting out before Hagler can counter, Sugar Ray survives being shaken in the ninth to take a split decision and the WBC title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

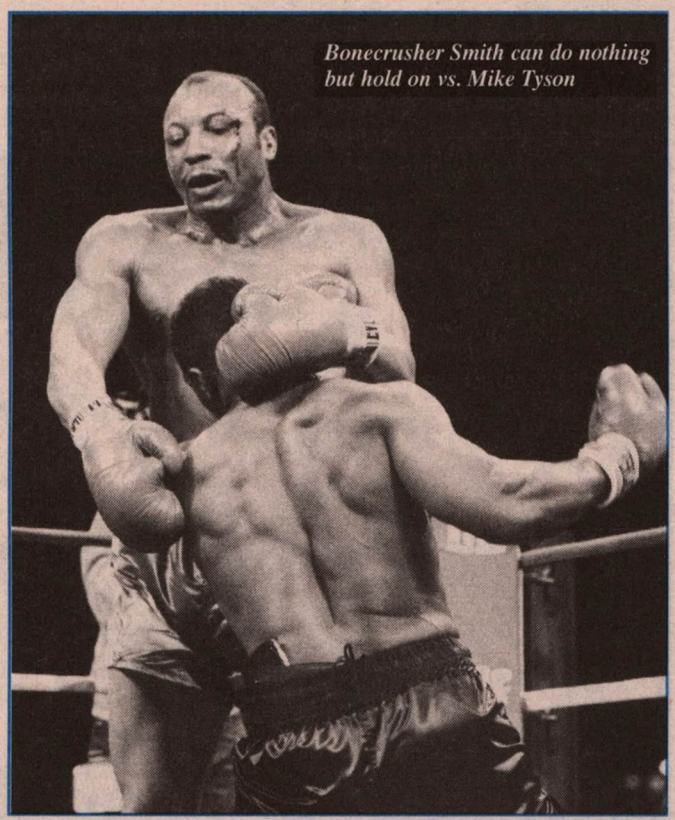
Evander Holyfield. The WBA junior heavyweight (cruiserweight) champion goes to 17-0 (13) by halting all four of his opponents, including Henry Tillman, Rickey Parkey (for the IBF title), and Ossie Ocasio. Holyfield finishes the year by twice flooring, then kayoing, former champ Dwight Qawi in four.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler. Despite showing signs of slowing down, Hagler is favored to defend the middleweight title against a Leonard who has fought just once in five years, and never at middleweight. Leonard, however, shocks the experts. Despite the layoff and added weight, he capitalizes on his greater hand and foot speed to take the WBC title by split decision.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

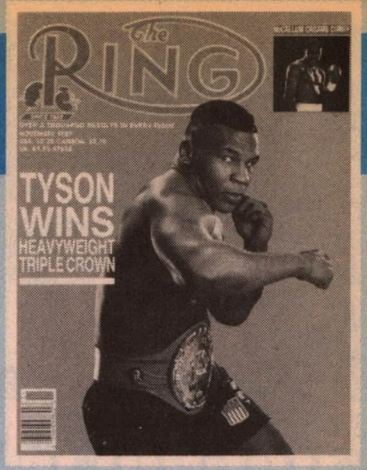
Kelvin Seabrooks-Thierry Jacob (1). IBF bantam champ Seabrooks, defending under a circus tent in Calais, France, is threatened by the unbeaten Jacob. Down twice early in the round, the American gets up to stagger and floor his foe. Seabrooks keeps the title when Jacob can't come out for the 10th round.



Bonecrusher Smith can do nothing but hold on vs. Mike Tyson

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Mike Tyson
Cruiserweight: Evander Holyfield
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Chong Pal Park
Middleweight: Sugar Ray Leonard
Junior Middleweight: Mike McCallum
Welterweight: Lloyd Honeyghan
Junior Welterweight: Roger Mayweather
Lightweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Junior Lightweight: Brian Mitchell
Featherweight: Azumah Nelson
Junior Featherweight: Jeff Fenech
Bantamweight: Miguel Lora
Junior Bantamweight: Khaosai Galaxy
Flyweight: Fidel Bassa
Junior Flyweight: Jung Koo Chang
Strawweight: Hiroki Ioka



NOVEMBER 1987

It Also Happened

Sugar Ray Leonard returns to take the middleweight title from Marvin Hagler (W 12); Hagler, 32, never fights again … George Foreman, 38, returns after a 10-year retirement … Mike Tyson unifies the heavyweight title, outpointing WBA champ Bonecrusher Smith (W 12) and IBF king Tony Tucker (W 12) … Evander Holyfield partially unifies the cruiser crown, kayoing Rickey Parkey in three … Thomas Hearns becomes a four-division champ, dethroning WBC light heavy king Dennis Andries (KO 10), then capturing the vacant WBC middleweight title (KO 4 Juan Roldan) … Mark Breland wins the vacant WBA welter crown (KO 7 Harold Volbrecht), then suffers an upset kayo vs. Marlon Starling (KO by 11) … Jeff Fenech wins his second title, downing WBC super bantam king Samart Payakarun (KO 4); Julio Cesar Chavez does the same, halting WBA lightweight champ Edwin Rosario (KO 11) … Three light heavy champs are crowned in less than three months: Virgil Hill (WBA), Prince Charles Williams (IBF), and Don Lalonde (WBC) … The WBC creates the strawweight division.

MAY 1988

1988

It Also Happened

Heavyweight champ Mike Tyson humbles a comebacking Larry Holmes (KO 4), then, in the biggest fight of his career, crushes previously undefeated Michael Spinks in 91 seconds; Spinks, 31, never fights again … Evander Holyfield unifies the cruiser crown (KO 8 Carlos DeLeon) … Azumah Nelson and Jeff Fenech become two-division and triple-crown champs, respectively … In a wild one, Simon Brown captures the vacant IBF welter title, halting Tyrone Trice in 14 … Shocker! Bleeding badly and battered, Iran Barkley kayos WBC middleweight boss Thomas Hearns with one punch (KO 3) … Sugar Ray Leonard wins his fourth and fifth titles, taking the WBC super middle and light heavy titles by stopping Don Lalonde (KO 9) … Tomas Molinares kayos WBA welter champ Marlon Starling with a punch thrown a split-second after the bell ending round six … Among those crowned: bantam Orlando Canizales, feather Jorge Paez, middleweight Michael Nunn, and junior light Tony Lopez … James Toney turns pro … Davey Moore, 28, is killed when an unoccupied car rolls over him in his driveway.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Tony Lopez W 12 Rocky Lockridge. IBF junior lightweight champ Lockridge, behind early and cut over both eyes, appears to finish hometown hero Lopez when he floors him with a right to the head in the eighth. The challenger comes back, however, staggering Lockridge in the 11th en route to a unanimous decision victory and the title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

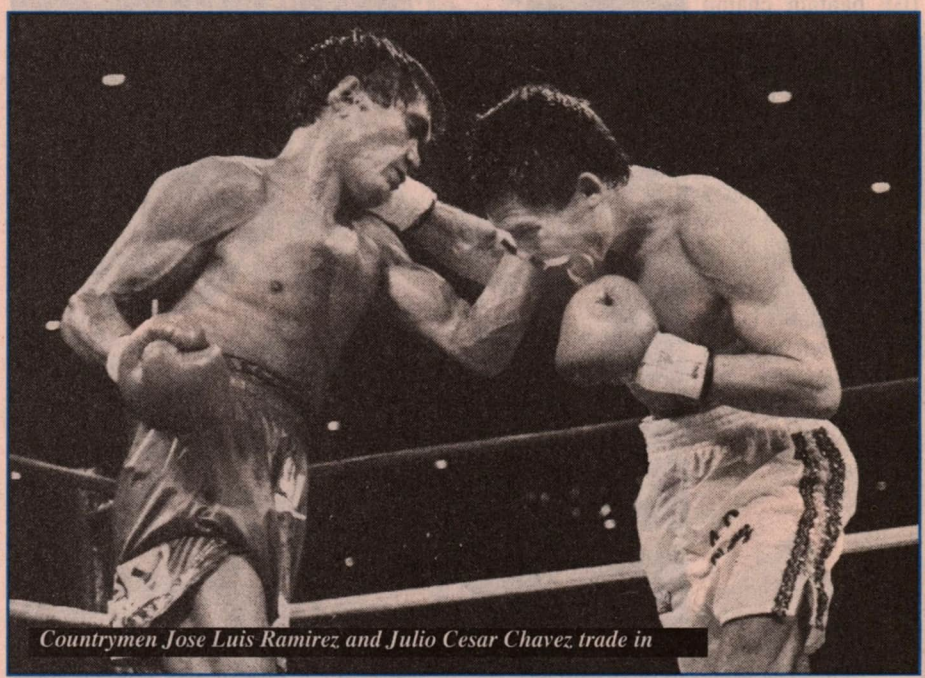
Mike Tyson. After unifying the heavyweight title in 1987, Tyson begins '88 with a four-round knockout of a comebacking Larry Holmes, followed by a two-round stoppage of another former titlist, Tony Tubbs. Then, on June 27, three days before his 22nd birthday, "Iron Mike" flattens the previously undefeated Michael Spinks in one. He advances to 35-0 (31).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Iran Barkley KO 3 Thomas Hearns. Hearns, who had won the vacant WBC middleweight crown the previous October, looks to be on his way to stopping "The Blade," who is bleeding badly from cuts over both eyes after the second round. Suddenly, in the third, a desperate Barkley floors Hearns with two rights. When "The Hit Man" arises, Barkley puts him through the ropes.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks (1). Tyson-Spinks, advertised and eagerly anticipated as "Once And For All," has barely begun when Spinks goes down from a bodyshot. He tries to fight back, but Tyson quickly unloads a crushing right that finishes him 91 seconds in.



Countrymen Jose Luis Ramirez and Julio Cesar Chavez trade in

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Mike Tyson
Cruiserweight: Evander Holyfield
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Graciano Rocchigiani
Middleweight: Michael Nunn
Junior Middleweight: Julian Jackson
Welterweight: Simon Brown
Junior Welterweight: Meldrick Taylor
Lightweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Antonio Esparragoza
Junior Featherweight: Daniel Zaragoza
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Gilberto Roman
Flyweight: Fidel Bassa
Junior Flyweight: Myung Woo Yuh
Strawweight: Leo Gamez

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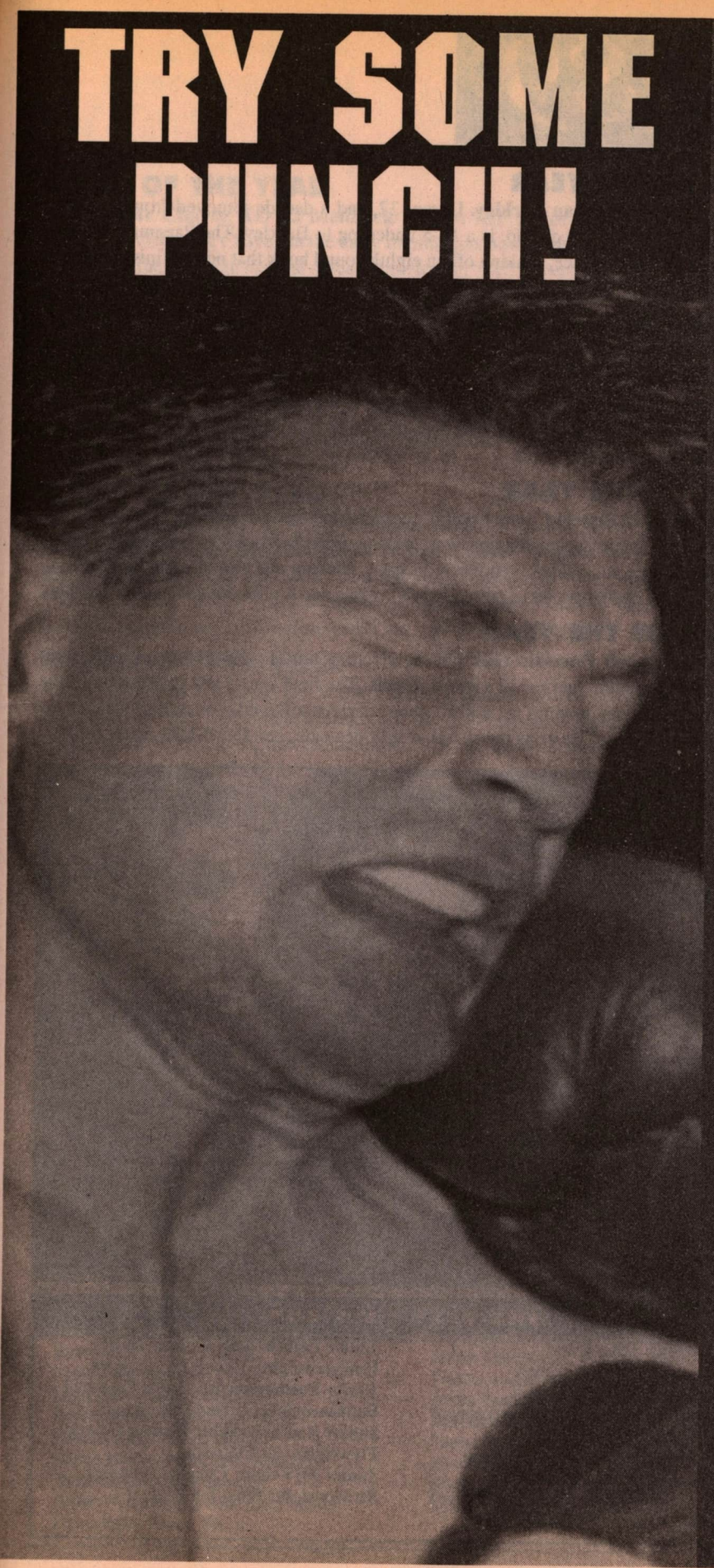

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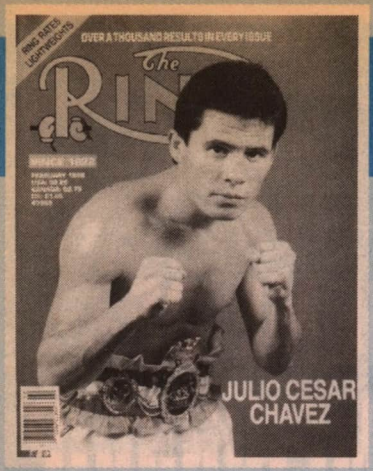


FEBRUARY 1989

1989

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Roberto Duran W 12 Iran Barkley. Duran, 37, and a decade removed from his glory years as world lightweight champ, is a 13-5 underdog to Barkley. The Panamanian turns in his last great performance, shaking off an eighth-round hook that nearly finishes him to floor Barkley in the 11th. He wins a split decision and the WBC middleweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

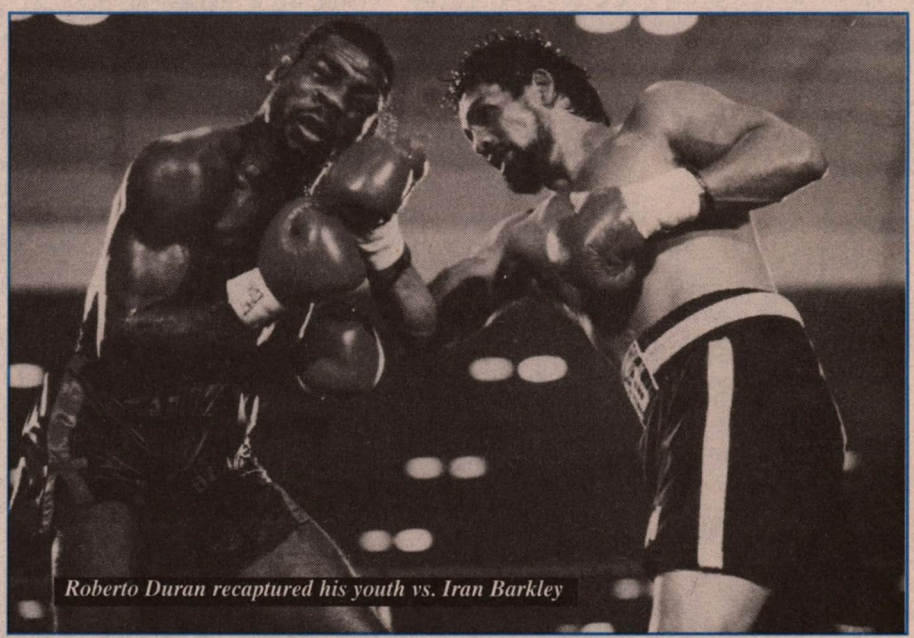
Pernell Whitaker. Having been robbed by a horrible decision the year before in a bout vs. WBC lightweight champ Jose Luis Ramirez, Whitaker begins 1989 by decisioning Greg Haugen for the IBF crown. After stopping Louie Lomeli in three, "Sweet Pea" soundly outpoints Ramirez for the WBC title, then stops Martin Galvan in a non-title bout. He finishes the year at 20-1 (12).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Rene Jacquot W 12 Donald Curry. Coming back after losses to Lloyd Honeyghan and Mike McCallum, WBC super welter champ Curry, looking ahead to a possible fight against Sugar Ray Leonard, faces unheralded Frenchman Jacquot. Sticking and moving, and never letting Curry get set, the challenger takes away Curry's dreams and his title by unanimous decision.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Lupe Gutierrez-Jeff Franklin (12). On the Hector Camacho-Ray Mancini undercard, Gutierrez and Franklin duel for 12 vicious rounds. The final stanza is a microcosm of the bout. Gutierrez opens gunning for a kayo, then survives a Franklin assault to stagger his foe in the final minute. He wins the round, a split decision, and the NABF feather title.



Roberto Duran recaptured his youth vs. Iran Barkley

It Also Happened

Seventeen years after winning his first title, Roberto Duran, 37, scores a thrilling 12-round decision over defending WBC middleweight champ Iran Barkley … Super middle Sugar Ray Leonard draws with Thomas Hearns (D 12) and decisions Duran (W 12) … Julio Cesar Chavez becomes a triple-crown titlist, dethroning WBC super lightweight champ Roger Mayweather (KO 10) … Pernell Whitaker is crowned IBF lightweight champ (W 12 Greg Haugen), the partially unifies by outpointing WBC king Jose Luis Ramirez (W 12) … In a stunner, substitute Jeff Harding rallies to stop WBC light heavy titlist Dennis Andries in the 12th and final round … Mike McCallum becomes a two-division champ, capturing the vacant WBA middleweight crown (W 12 Herol Graham) … Junior fly Chiquita Gonzalez is crowned WBC champ for the first time (W 12 Yul Woo Lee) … Marco Antonio Barrera, Roy Jones, Lennox Lewis, Riddick Bowe, and Michael Carbajal turn pro.

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Mike Tyson
Cruiserweight: Robert Daniels
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Sugar Ray Leonard
Middleweight: Michael Nunn
Junior Middleweight: Julian Jackson
Welterweight: Simon Brown
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Antonio Esparragoza
Junior Featherweight: Daniel Zaragoza
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Khaosai Galaxy
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada
Junior Flyweight: Chiquita Gonzalez
Strawweight: Bong Jun Kim

1990

JANUARY 1990

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Julio Cesar Chavez KO 12 Meldrick Taylor. IBF junior welter champion Taylor outboxes WBC king Chavez in the early rounds, jars him in the ninth, and seems en route to handing the Mexican his first defeat. Undeterred, "J.C. Superstar" digs to Taylor's body, then floors him late in the 12th, prompting referee Richard Steele to stop the bout with only two seconds remaining.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

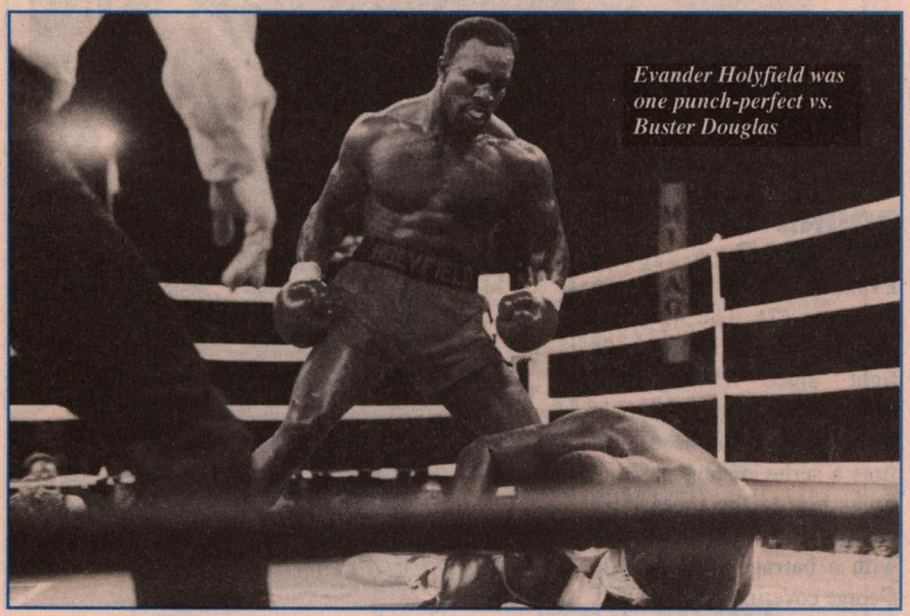
Julio Cesar Chavez. Chavez wins all five of his bouts by knockout, three of them non-title fights. In adding the IBF junior welterweight belt to his collection, he proves his greatness by rallying in the last round to stop previously unbeaten Meldrick Taylor. Chavez finishes at 73-0 (60).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Buster Douglas KO 10 Mike Tyson. Heavyweight champion Tyson, 37-0 (33), seems invincible as he enters the Tokyo Dome to defend against Douglas, a 42-1 underdog. But the challenger shocks "Iron Mike" and the world, outboxing Tyson early and wobbling him in the fifth. Tyson floors Douglas late in the eighth, but Big Bus comes back to hammer Tyson in the ninth before knocking him out in the 10th.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Aaron Davis-Mark Breland (9). WBA welterweight champion Breland, down in the third, comes back to close Davis' right eye and rock him in the eighth. Breland seems on his way to victory when, with only seconds remaining in the ninth, the challenger uncorks a desperation right that catches his fellow New Yorker flush on the jaw, flooring him for the count.



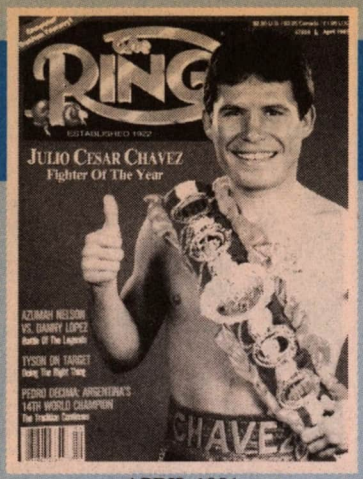
Evander Holyfield was one punch-perfect vs. Buster Douglas

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Buster Douglas
Cruiserweight: Robert Daniels
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Chris Tiozzo
Middleweight: Michael Nunn
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Simon Brown
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Jorge Paez
Junior Featherweight: Welcome Ncita
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Khaosai Galaxy
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada
Junior Flyweight: Chiquita Gonzalez
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez

It Also Happened

In the greatest upset ever, 42-1 underdog Buster Douglas dethrones undisputed heavyweight champ Mike Tyson (KO 10); Douglas then loses by third-round kayo to Evander Holyfield … In a fantastic war, Julio Cesar Chavez partly unifies the junior welter title, stopping Meldrick Taylor with two seconds remaining in the 12th and final round … The comebacking George Foreman, 40, kayos Gerry Cooney in two … In his second title shot, Terry Norris wins the WBC super welter crown, taming John "The Beast" Mugabi in one … Marcos Villasana wins a world title on his fifth try, capturing the vacant WBC feather title (KO 8 Paul Hodkinson) … Michael Carbajal takes the IBF junior fly title from Muangchai Kittikasem by seventh-round kayo; Rolando Pascua shocks the WBC champ, Chiquita Gonzalez, halting him in six … Julian Jackson wins his second title, capturing the vacant WBC middleweight crown with one punch (KO 4 Herol Graham) … Felix Trinidad turns pro, and Wilfred Benitez, 32, fights for the last time … Gilberto Roman, 28, is killed in a car accident in Mexico.



APRIL 1991

1991

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Robert Quiroga W 12 Akeem Anifowoshe. Quiroga defends the IBF junior bantam title in a war that remains the most thrilling in the division's short history. After 12 toe-to-toe rounds, both warriors are a bloody mess. Quiroga retains the title by unanimous decision. Anifowoshe, rushed into surgery to remove pressure on his brain, survives, but never fights again.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

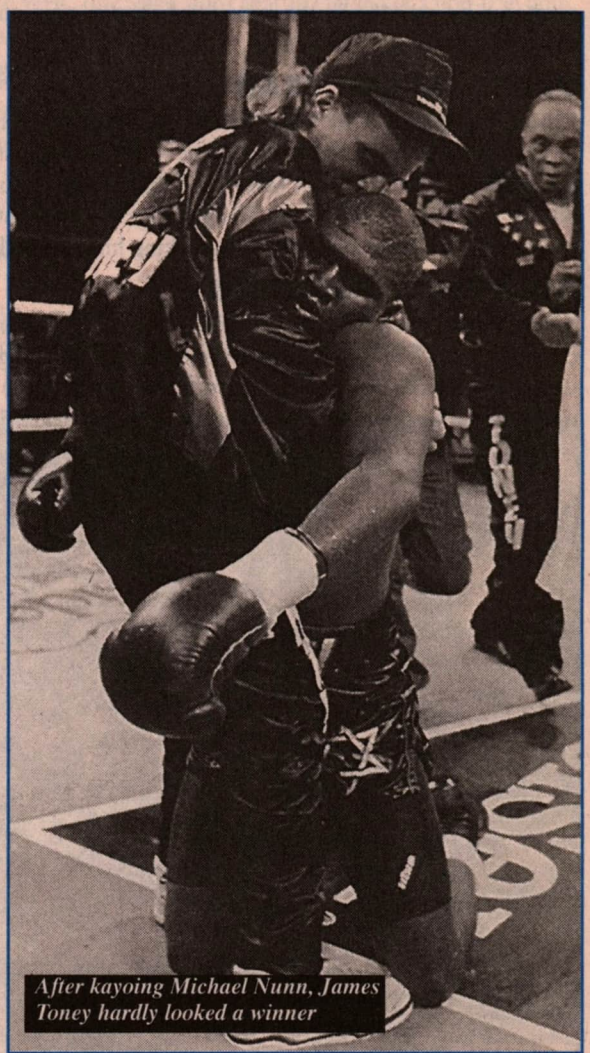
James Toney. Toney earns a middleweight title shot against IBF champ Michael Nunn by defeating Merqui Sosa over 12 rounds. "Lights Out" rallies to twice floor and stop Nunn in 11. He then successfully defends against Reggie Johnson, Francesco Dell 'Aquilla, and, in a hard-fought draw, Mike McCallum. Toney advances to 28-0-2 (20).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

James Toney KO 11 Michael Nunn. Toney, picked as a sacrificial lamb for IBF middleweight champ Nunn's Davenport, Iowa, homecoming, is a 20-1 underdog. Behind early, the challenger begins scoring with right hands in the seventh, pressures Nunn to the body, then floors him twice in the 11th before the bout is stopped.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Evander Holyfield-George Foreman (7). The 42-year-old Foreman, in his first title fight since 1974, stuns heavyweight champ Holyfield with a right to the head, then fires a series of punches that backs him to the ropes. Still shaken, Holyfield fires back with a barrage that has Big George covering up at the bell.



After kayoing Michael Nunn, James Toney hardly looked a winner

It Also Happened

Evander Holyfield retains the heavyweight title, outpointing George Foreman, 42 (W 12) … Mike Tyson is indicted for rape … Meldrick Taylor wins his second title, dethroning WBA welter king Aaron Davis (W 12); Simon Brown partly unifies the title, kayoing best friend Maurice Blocker (KO 10) … Junior lightweight champs Brian Mitchell (WBA) and Tony Lopez (IBF) struggle to a 12-round draw … Sugar Ray Leonard, 34, retires—again—after being pounded en route to a points loss to WBC super welter king Terry Norris (L 12) … Thomas Hearns wins the light heavy title for a second time, decisioning WBA champ Virgil Hill (W 12) … Kid Akeem collapses after his 12-round points loss to IBF junior bantam champ Robert Quiroga; surgery saves his life … Jeff Fenech is denied a fourth title when he draws with WBC super feather king Azumah Nelson … James Warring scores the quickest kayo in title-fight history, winning the vacant IBF cruiser crown with a 24-second stoppage of James Pritchard … James Toney wins the IBF middle title, coming from behind to kayo Michael Nunn (KO 11).

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Evander Holyfield
Cruiserweight: Anaclet Wamba
Light Heavyweight: Prince Charles Williams
Super Middleweight: Victor Cordoba
Middleweight: James Toney
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Meldrick Taylor
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Lightweight: Brian Mitchell
Featherweight: Manuel Medina
Junior Featherweight: Welcome Ncita
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Khaosai Galaxy
Flyweight: Muangchai Kittikasem
Junior Flyweight: Michael Carbajal
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez

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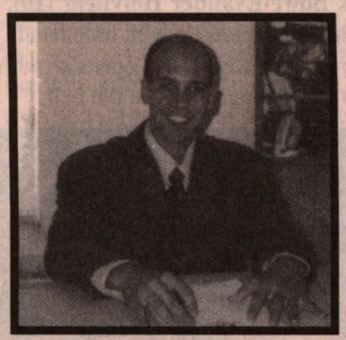

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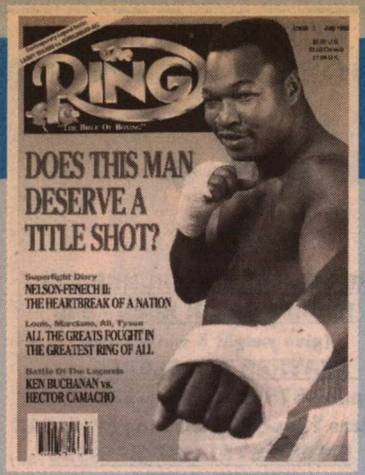


JULY 1992

1992

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Riddick Bowe W 12 Evander Holyfield. Despite giving away height, weight, and reach, heavyweight champ Holyfield battles the younger, stronger Bowe in the trenches, and it costs him. After a furious 10th round that sees both fighters rocked, Bowe drops Holyfield in the 11th, then holds off a desperate rally in the 12th for the decision and the title.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Riddick Bowe. Bowe wins three straight by knockout, the last over Pierre Coetzer, before facing heavyweight champ Evander Holyfield in November. In a slugfest highlighted by furious exchanges and an 11th-round knockdown, "Big Daddy" emerges as a unanimous decision winner and new champ. He advances to 32-0 (27).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

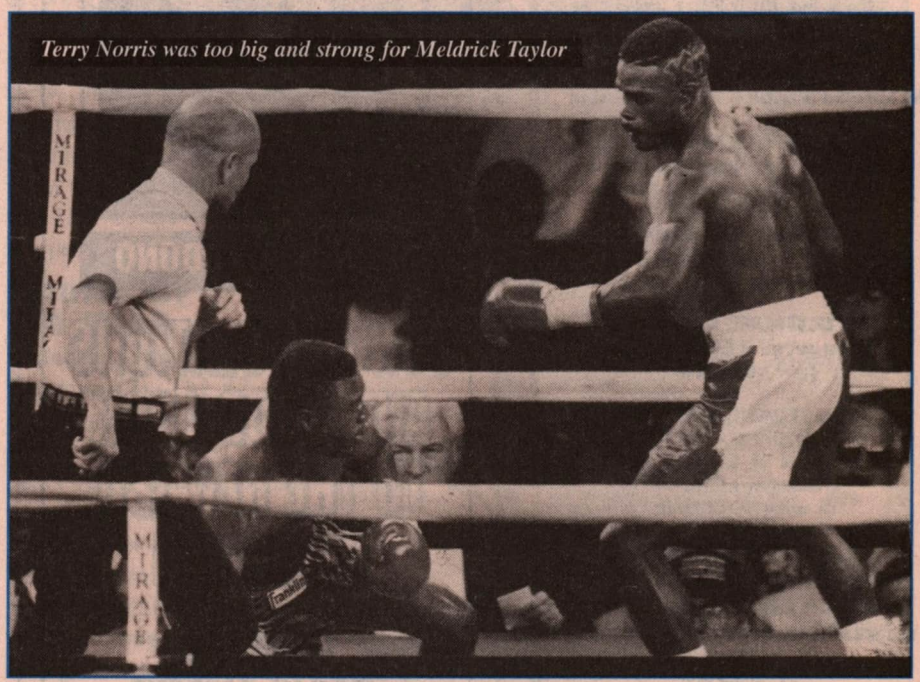
Azumah Nelson KO 8 Jeff Fenech. In their first fight in Las Vegas the year before, Australia's Fenech had seemingly beaten Nelson, only to settle for a draw. Fighting on his soil, Fenech goes into the rematch the favorite, but Nelson floors him in the first and second rounds before handing him his first defeat and retaining the WBC super feather title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Riddick Bowe-Evander Holyfield (10). Early in the round, the bigger Bowe staggers Holyfield, then opens up with both hands. Holyfield, although hurt, refuses to fall. When Bowe tires, "The Real Deal" opens up with a two-fisted barrage that shakes the challenger. The two are trading evenly at the bell.

It Also Happened

Mike Tyson is convicted of rape and sentenced to six years imprisonment … The comebacking Larry Holmes, 42, outpoints contender Ray Mercer (W 12), but loses to world champ Evander Holyfield (L 12); in a corker, Riddick Bowe takes the heavyweight title from Holyfield (W 12) … Iran Barkley becomes a triple-crown champ, beating WBA light heavy champ Thomas Hearns for a second time (W 12) … WBC super feather titlist Azumah Nelson kayos Jeff Fenech in Australia (KO 8) … In a battle of champs, Terry Norris crushes Meldrick Taylor in four; Taylor then loses the WBA welter title to Crisanto Espana (KO by 8) … Pernell Whitaker jumps to junior welter and dethrones IBF king Rafael Pineda (W 12) … Yuri Arbachakov becomes the first Russian-born world champ, kayoing WBC fly boss Muangchai Kittikasem in eight … Lightweight champs Joey Gamache and Miguel Angel Gonzalez are crowned, as are Nigel Benn (super middle), Kennedy McKinney (junior feather), and Julio Cesar Vasquez (junior middle) … Oscar De La Hoya and Kostya Tszyu turn pro, and Eusebio Pedroza, 39, fights for the last time.



Terry Norris was too big and strong for Meldrick Taylor

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Riddick Bowe
Cruiserweight: Anaclet Wamba
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Nigel Benn
Middleweight: James Toney
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Buddy McGirt
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Miguel Angel Gonzalez
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Yung Kyun Park
Junior Featherweight: Kennedy McKinney
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Robert Quiroga
Flyweight: Yuri Arbachakov
Junior Flyweight: Chiquita Gonzalez
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez

1993

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Michael Carbajal KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez. The much-anticipated junior fly title clash between IBF champ Carbajal and WBC titlist Gonzalez surpasses expectations. Down in the second, Carbajal looks finished. Worse yet, Gonzalez floors him in the fifth. But the American comes back in the seventh to kayo Chiquita with a tremendous left hook.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

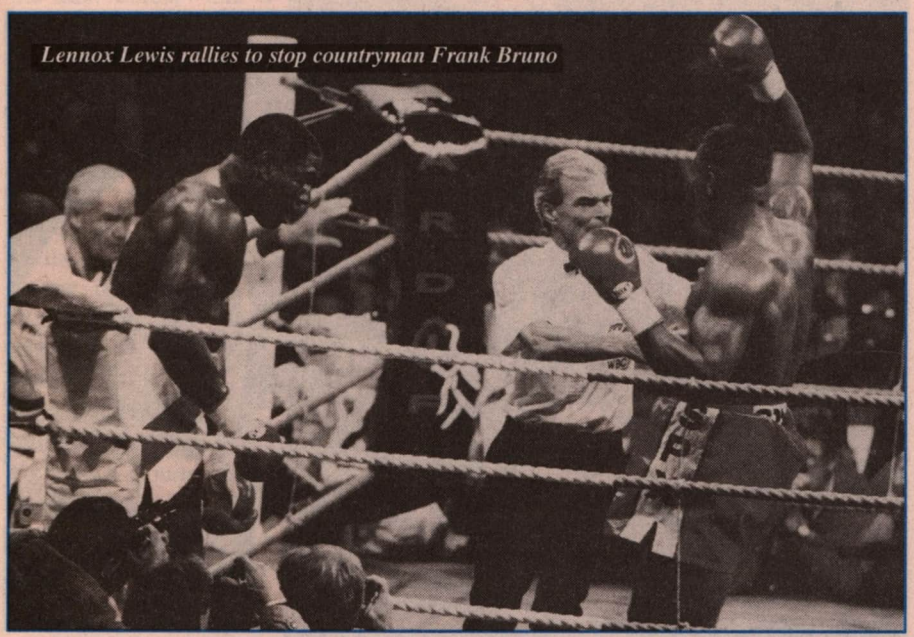
Michael Carbajal. The IBF junior fly champ begins 1993 by winning the biggest fight in the history of his division, twice getting off the deck to kayo WBC king Chiquita Gonzalez. "Little Hands Of Stone" follows with kayos of Kwang Sun Kim, Domingo Sosa, and Robinson Cuesta to finish the year at 27-0 (15).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Simon Brown KO 4 Terry Norris. Considered washed-up, former welter champ Brown steps into the ring against a titlist who hasn't lost in more than four years. Still a dangerous puncher, Brown floors Norris in the first, and repeatedly staggers him with right hands before knocking him cold in the fourth. In a shocker, Brown takes "Terrible Terry's" WBC super welter title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

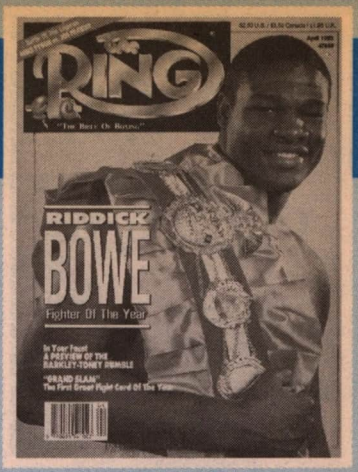
Terry Norris-Troy Waters (2). WBC super welter champ Norris floors and nearly kayos Waters in the first. But after opening the second by scoring with two big rights, Waters, a 30-1 underdog, shocks the champion by flooring him with a right to the head. Norris resumes his attack, and Waters goes toe-to-toe with him through the rest of the round.



Lennox Lewis rallies to stop countryman Frank Bruno

THE BEST FIGHTERS

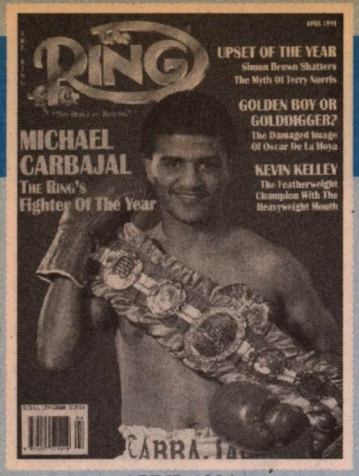
Heavyweight: Riddick Bowe
Cruiserweight: Orlin Norris
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: James Toney
Middleweight: Roy Jones
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Miguel Angel Gonzalez
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Kevin Kelley
Junior Featherweight: Kennedy McKinney
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Julio Borboa
Flyweight: Yuri Arbachakov
Junior Flyweight: Michael Carbajal
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez



APRIL 1993

It Also Happened

WBA & IBF heavyweight champ Riddick Bowe loses the title to Evander Holyfield (L 12); Fan Man makes an unscheduled visit during round seven … Heavyweight Tommy Morrison surprises George Foreman (W 12) … Pernell Whitaker becomes a triple-crown titlist by dethroning WBC welter king Buddy McGirt (W 12); "Sweet Pea" then dominates junior welter champ Julio Cesar Chavez, but is given only a draw (D 12) … German southpaw Henry Maske takes the IBF light heavy title from Prince Charles Williams (W 12) … Roy Jones wins his first title, capturing the vacant IBF middleweight crown (W 12 Bernard Hopkins) … James Toney becomes a two-division champ, besting IBF super middle boss Iran Barkley (KO 9) … In the first junior fly superfight, Michael Carbajal rises from two knockdowns to halt Chiquita Gonzalez (KO 7) … Felix Trinidad wins the IBF welter crown, crushing Maurice Blocker (KO 2) … Kevin Kelley (feather), Tom Johnson (feather), and Junior Jones (bantam) are crowned … Simon Brown shocks WBC super welter king Terry Norris (KO 4).



APRIL 1994

1994

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jorge Castro KO 9 John David Jackson. Defending the WBA middleweight title against the unbeaten Jackson, Castro takes a beating for eight rounds. When Jackson goes in for the finish in the ninth, however, the Argentine, cut badly over both eyes, floors the southpaw three times, bringing a dramatic stoppage.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Roy Jones. The reigning IBF middleweight champ, Jones begins the year with a non-title kayo of Daniel Garcia and a defense vs. Thomas Tate (KO 2). Then, in November, he shocks the experts by easily defeating defending IBF super middle champ James Toney (W 12). Jones ends the year at 27-0 (23).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

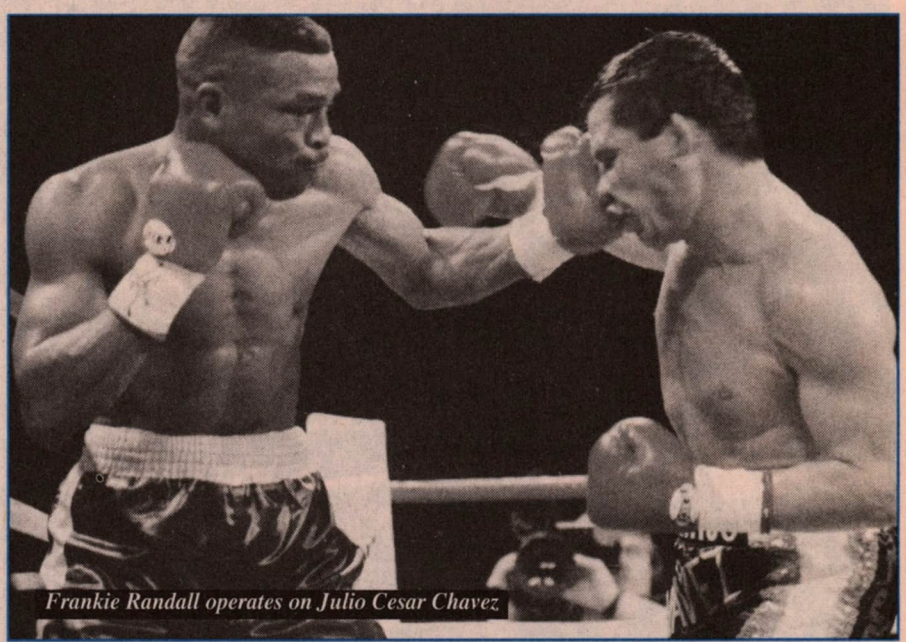
Vuyani Bungu W 12 Kennedy McKinney. Coming off his second victory over Welcome Ncita, IBF junior feather champ McKinney, is heavily favored over the unranked challenger. Bungu shocks McKinney, however, flooring him in the second and clearly outboxing him en route to a unanimous decision victory and the title.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jorge Castro-John David Jackson (9). Jackson opens the ninth with an attack that has the weary Castro bleeding badly. The challenger then drives Castro into the ropes with a left to the body, but the Argentine shockingly scores a miracle knockdown with a hook to the jaw. After Jackson arises, still hurt, Castro floors him twice more, ending the bout.

It Also Happened

In a shocker, Oliver McCall wins the WBC heavyweight title, crushing Lennox Lewis in two; Michael Moorer takes the WBA and IBF titles, outpointing Evander Holyfield (W 12), but then loses by one-punch kayo to 45-year-old George Foreman (KO by 10) … Mike McCallum becomes a triple-crown champ by dethroning WBC light heavy boss Jeff Harding (W 12) … In the year's most anticipated fight, Roy Jones wins the IBF super middle belt, easily outpointing James Toney (W 12) … Julio Cesar Chavez loses for the first time when Frankie Randall floors him and takes the WBC super lightweight crown (W 12); Chavez wins the rematch by eighth-round technical decision … Upset! South Africa's Vuyani Bungu derails IBF junior feather boss Kennedy McKinney (W 12) … Gaining revenge, and regaining the WBC & IBF junior fly titles, Chiquita Gonzalez twice decisions Michael Carbajal … After Terry Norris regains the WBC super welter title from Simon Brown (W 12), he's upended via fifth-round DQ by Luis Santana … Azumah Nelson is finally dethroned, losing the WBC super feather belt to Jesse James Leija (L 12) … Among those crowned as world champs: Ike Quartey and the brothers Rafael and Gabe Ruelas.



Frankie Randall operates on Julio Cesar Chavez

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: George Foreman
Cruiserweight: Orlin Norris
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Roy Jones
Middleweight: Gerald McClellan
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Welterweight: Frankie Randall
Lightweight: Miguel Angel Gonzalez
Junior Lightweight: Gabe Ruelas
Featherweight: Kevin Kelley
Junior Featherweight: Vuyani Bungu
Bantamweight: Orlando Canizales
Junior Bantamweight: Harold Grey
Flyweight: Yuri Arbachakov
Junior Flyweight: Chiquita Gonzalez
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez

1995

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Saman Sorjaturong KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez. In the midst of his third reign, and coming off a pair of victories over arch-rival Michael Carbajal, WBC-IBF junior fly champ Gonzalez, twice floors Sorjaturong and batters him through six. In the seventh, the Thai catches Chiquita coming in, floors him, then knocks him out to take both titles.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

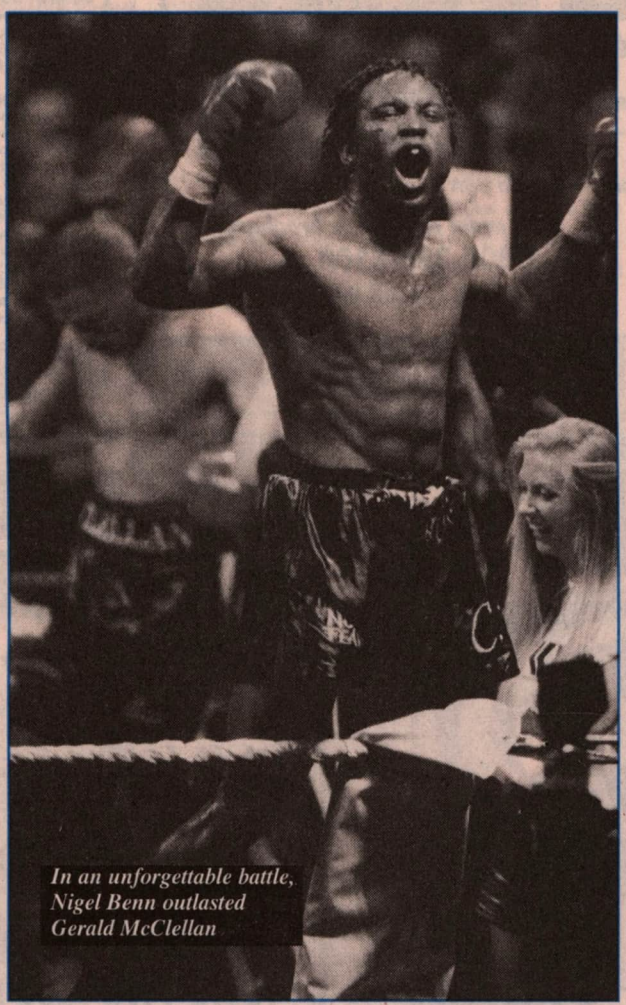
Oscar De La Hoya. The sensational lightweight begins the year with a 12-round decision over John-John Molina, then stops IBF champ Rafael Ruelas in two. After giving up the title, "The Golden Boy" halts former WBA junior light champ Genaro Hernandez in six and crushes another former titlist, Jesse James Leija, in two. He finishes a fantastic year at 20-0 (18).

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Willy Salazar KO 7 Danny Romero. IBF fly champ Romero, unbeaten in 25 bouts, faces Salazar, who enters with a record of 41-21-1. Fortunately for Romero, the bout is a non-title affair. He suffers his first defeat—and a fractured eye socket—when he is unable to continue after seven rounds.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

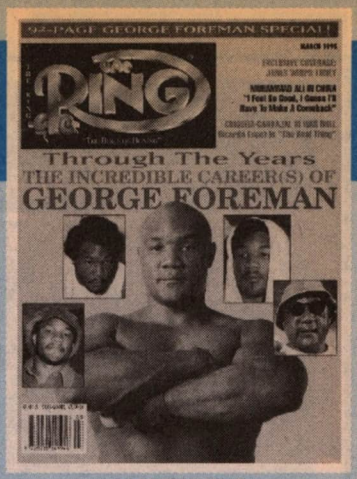
Saman Sorjaturong-Chiquita Gonzalez (7). As the round begins, Sojaturong, downed twice in the sixth, his face battered and swollen, looks like a sure loser. When Gonzalez tries to finish him, however, he strikes back, dropping Chiquita with a hook to the jaw, then knocking him out to become the new WBC/IBF junior fly champ.



In an unforgettable battle, Nigel Benn outlasted Gerald McClellan

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Riddick Bowe
Cruiserweight: Nate Miller
Light Heavyweight: Henry Maske
Super Middleweight: Roy Jones
Middleweight: Bernard Hopkins
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Pernell Whitaker
Junior Welterweight: Julio Cesar Chavez
Lightweight: Oscar De La Hoya
Junior Lightweight: Tracy Patterson
Featherweight: Tom Johnson
Junior Featherweight: Marco Antonio Barrera
Bantamweight: Wayne McCullough
Junior Bantamweight: Hiroshi Kawashima
Flyweight: Yuri Arbachakov
Junior Flyweight: Saman Sorjaturong
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez



MARCH 1995

It Also Happened

In a fantastic battle, Nigel Benn retains the WBC super middle title, halting Gerald McClellan in 10; the loser undergoes brain surgery from injuries suffered in the bout and emerges virtually blind and deaf … Three new heavyweight champs are crowned: Frank Bruno, Bruce Seldon, and Frans Botha, and three new middleweight kings as well: Bernard Hopkins, Quincy Taylor, and Shinji Takehara … Released from prison, Mike Tyson fights for the first time in four years, stopping Peter McNeeley (W Disq. 1) and Buster Mathis Jr. (KO 3) … Pernell Whitaker wins his fourth title, outpointing WBA junior middle champ Julio Cesar Vasquez (W 12) … In a breakthrough fight, Oscar De La Hoya demolishes IBF lightweight king Rafael Ruelas in two … Unheralded Thai Saman Sorjaturong stages a remarkable comeback to shock WBC-IBF junior fly champ Chiquita Gonzalez (KO 7) … Danny Romero becomes the first American flyweight titlist in 60 years, dumping IBF king Francisco Tejedor (W 12) … Among those crowned: Kostya Tszyu, Arturo Gatti, and Wayne McCullough.

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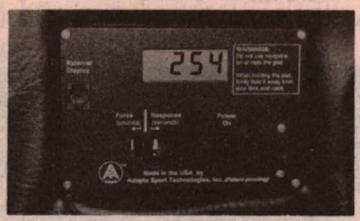

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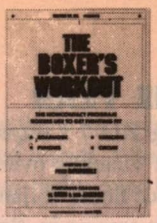

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1996

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson. After 47 of 48 writers polled pick the younger, fresher Tyson to retain the WBA title, Holyfield matches "Iron Mike" punch for punch, drops him in the sixth, and finally halts him after 10-plus rounds of exciting action.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

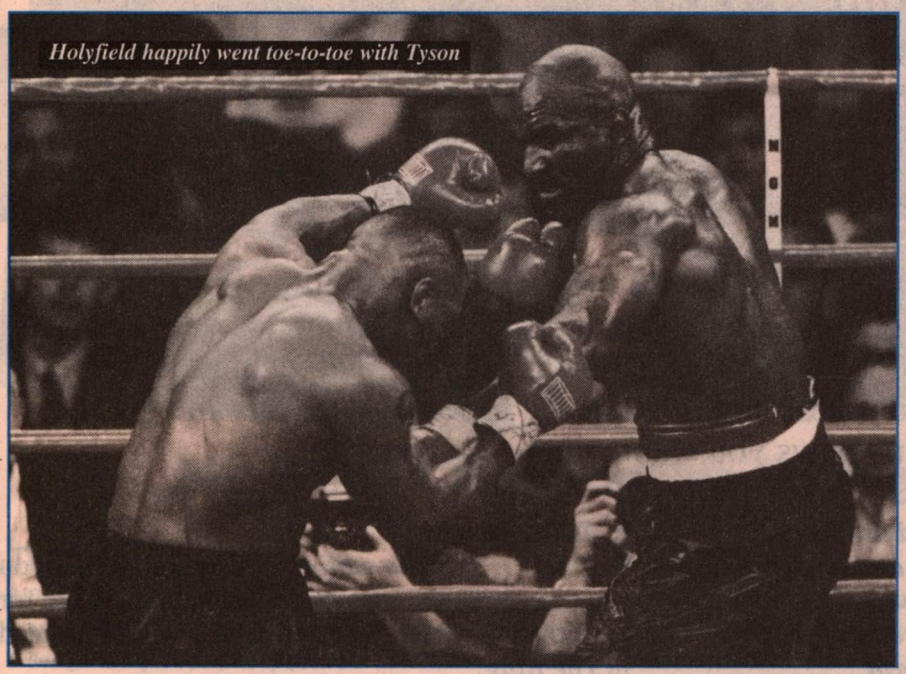
Evander Holyfield. Thought to be washed-up after a disappointing kayo loss to Riddick Bowe in '95, Holyfield comes back to halt Bobby Czyz (KO 6) and then, in a shocker, fight brilliantly to upset WBA heavyweight champ Mike Tyson. "The Real Deal" joins Muhammad Ali as the only three-time heavyweight titlist.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson. Dismissed by all but a few as faded and one fight from retirement, Holyfield opens as an 18-1 underdog. (At fight time, the odds are 6-1.) But instead of folding in a round or two, he gives a strategically brilliant, high-energy performance, flooring Tyson and halting him in the 11th round.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Frank Liles-Tim Littles (3). It doesn't get much crazier than this. Defending the WBA super middle title, Liles falls through the ropes 10 seconds in, when Littles catches him with a pair of rights. Later in the round, the challenger lands low and twice shoves Liles to the canvas. Then, with 12 seconds remaining, Liles fires a counter hook. Boom! Littles goes down face-first, and upon trying to rise, falls into the ropes, prompting a stoppage.

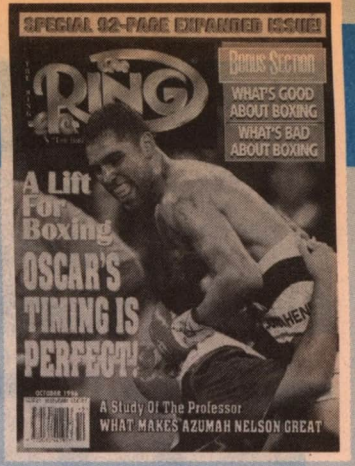


Holyfield happily went toe-to-toe with Tyson

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

THE BEST FIGHTERS

Heavyweight: Evander Holyfield
Cruiserweight: Adolpho Washington
Light Heavyweight: Virgil Hill
Super Middleweight: Roy Jones
Middleweight: Bernard Hopkins
Junior Middleweight: Terry Norris
Welterweight: Felix Trinidad
Junior Welterweight: Oscar De La Hoya
Lightweight: Orzubek Nazarov
Junior Lightweight: Azumah Nelson
Featherweight: Tom Johnson
Junior Featherweight: Junior Jones
Bantamweight: Wayne McCullough
Junior Bantamweight: Hiroshi Kawashima
Flyweight: Mark Johnson
Junior Flyweight: Michael Carbajal
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez



OCTOBER 1996

It Also Happened

Mike Tyson regains the WBC heavyweight title (which he vacates) and the WBA crown, kayoing Frank Bruno and Bruce Seldon, respectively. Then, in a shocker, he is stopped in 11 by Evander Holyfield … In the year's most anticipated non-heavyweight bout, Oscar De La Hoya halts defending WBC super lightweight king Julio Cesar Chavez on cuts (KO 4) … In a memorable battle, junior feather Marco Antonio Barrera kayos Kennedy McKinney in 12; later in the year, former bantam champ Junior Jones stuns Barrera (KO 5) … Female fighter Christy Martin becomes a mainstream star … Wilfredo Vazquez becomes a triple-crown champ by dethroning WBA feather boss Eloy Rojas (W 12) … Michael Carbajal begins another reign as IBF junior fly champ … Philadelphia's David Reid lands a one-punch kayo to win the USA's only gold medal at the Olympic Games in Atlanta … After Riddick Bowe's seventh-round disqualification win over Andrew Golota at Madison Square Garden, a riot erupts … Chiquita Gonzalez, 30, and Nigel Benn, 32, retire, and Sugar Ray Leonard, 40, announces his return.

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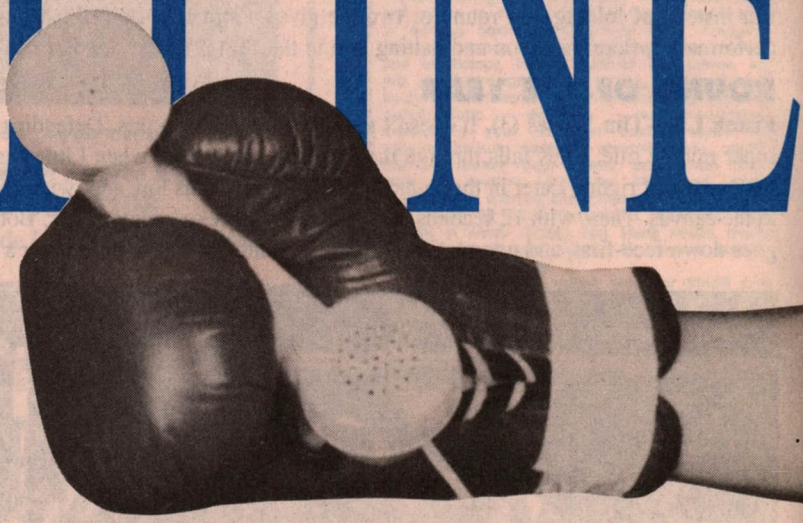

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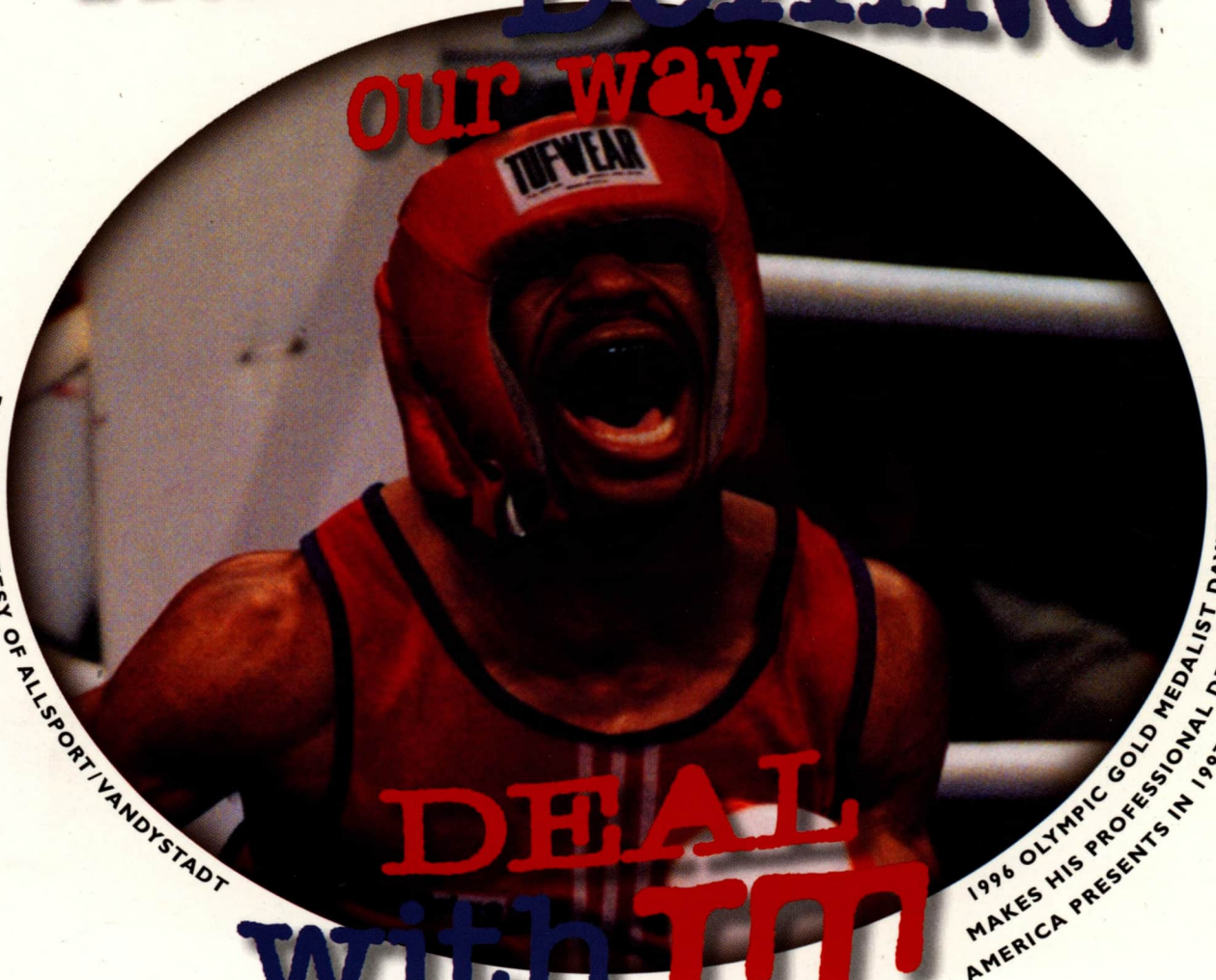

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